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The Yellow Book, Vol. 4

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John Lane

Henry Harland

Patten Wilson

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The Yellow Book

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Study of a Head

By H. J. Draper

Home . . .

By Richard Le Gallienne

"We're going home!" I heard two lovers say,
They kissed their friends and bade them bright
good-byes;
I hid the deadly hunger in my eyes,
And, lest I might have killed them, turned away.
Ah, love, we too once gambolled home as they,
Home from the town with such fair merchandise.—
Wine and great grapes—the happy lover buys:
A little cosy feast to crown the day.

Yes! we had once a heaven we called a home,
Its empty rooms still haunt me like thine eyes
When the last sunset softly faded there;
Each day I tread each empty haunted room,
And now and then a little baby cries,
Or laughs a lovely laughter worse to bear.

The Bohemian Girl

By Henry Harland

I

I WOKE up very gradually this morning, and it took me a little while to bethink myself where I had slept—that it had not been in my own room in the Cromwell Road. I lay a-bed, with eyes half-closed, drowsily looking forward to the usual procession of sober-hued London hours, and, for the moment, quite forgot the journey of yesterday, and how it had left me in Paris, a guest in the smart new house of my old friend, Nina Childe. Indeed, it was not until somebody tapped on my door, and I roused myself to call out, "Come in," that I noticed the strangeness of the wall-paper, and then, after an instant of perplexity, suddenly remembered. Oh, with a wonderful lightening of the spirit, I can tell you.

A white-capped, brisk young woman, with a fresh-coloured, wholesome peasant face, came in, bearing a tray—Jeanne, Nina's femme-de-chambre.

"Bonjour, monsieur," she cried cheerily. "I bring monsieur his coffee." And her announcement was followed by a fragrance —the softly-sung response of the coffee-sprite. Her tray, with its pretty freight of silver and linen, primrose butter, and gently-browned

browned pain-de-gruau, she set down on the table at my elbow; then she crossed the room and drew back the window-curtains, making the rings tinkle crisply on the metal rods, and letting in a gush of dazzling sunshine. From where I lay I could see the house-fronts opposite glow pearly-grey in shadow, and the crest of the slate roofs sharply print itself on the sky, like a black line on a sheet of scintillant blue velvet. Yet, a few minutes ago, I had been fancying myself in the Cromwell Road.

Jeanne, gathering up my scattered garments, to take them off and brush them, inquired, by the way, if monsieur had passed a comfortable night.

"As the chambermaid makes your bed, so you must lie in it," I answered. "And you know whether my bed was smoothly made."

Jeanne smiled indulgently. But her next remark—did it imply that she found me rusty? "Here's a long time that you haven't been in Paris."

"Yes," I admitted; "not since May, and now we're in November."

"We have changed things a little, have we not?" she demanded, with a gesture that left the room, and included the house, the street, the quarter.

"In effect," assented I.

"Monsieur desires his hot water?" she asked, abruptly irrelevant.

But I could be, or at least seem, abruptly irrelevant too. "Mademoiselle—is she up?"

"Ah, yes, monsieur. Mademoiselle has been up since eight. She awaits you in the salon. La voilà qui joue," she added, pointing to the floor.

Nina had begun to play scales in the room below.

"Then you may bring me my hot water," I said.

II

The scales continued while I was dressing, and many desultory reminiscences of the player, and vague reflections upon the unlikelihood of her adventures, went flitting through my mind to their rhythm. Here she was, scarcely turned thirty, beautiful, brilliant, rich in her own right, as free in all respects to follow her own will as any man could be, with Camille happily at her side, a well-grown, rosy, merry miss of twelve,—here was Nina, thus, to-day; and yet, a mere little ten years ago, I remembered her . . . . ah, in a very different plight indeed. True, she has got no more than her deserts; she has paid for her success, every pennyweight of it, in hard work and self denial. But one is so expectant, here below, to see Fortune capricious, that, when for once in a way she bestows her favours where they are merited, one can't help feeling rather dazed. One is so inured to seeing honest Effort turn empty-handed from her door.

Ten little years ago—but no. I must begin further back. I must tell you something about Nina's father.

III

He was an Englishman who lived for the greater part of his life in Paris. I would say he was a painter, if he had not been equally a sculptor, a musician, an architect, a writer of verse, and a university coach. A doer of so many things is inevitably suspect; you will imagine that he must have bungled them all. On the contrary,

contrary, whatever he did, he did with a considerable degree of accomplishment. The landscapes he painted were very fresh and pleasing, delicately coloured, with lots of air in them, and a dreamy, suggestive sentiment. His brother sculptors declared that his statuettes were modelled with exceeding dash and directness; they were certainly fanciful and amusing. I remember one that I used to like immensely—Titania driving to a tryst with Bottom, her chariot a lily, daises for wheels, and for steeds a pair of mettlesome field-mice. I doubt if he ever got a commission for a complete house; but the staircases he designed, the fireplaces, and other bits of buildings, everybody thought original and graceful. The tunes he wrote were lively and catching, the words never stupid, sometimes even strikingly happy, epigrammatic; and he sang them delightfully, in a robust, hearty baritone. He coached the youth of France, for their examinations, in Latin and Greek, in history, mathematics, general literature—in goodness knows what not; and his pupils failed so rarely that, when one did, the circumstance became a nine days' wonder. The world beyond the Students' Quarter had never heard of him, but there he was a celebrity and a favourite; and, strangely enough for a man with so many strings to his bow, he contrived to pick up a sufficient living.

He was a splendid creature to look at, tall, stalwart, full-blooded, with a ruddy open-air complexion; a fine bold brow and nose; brown eyes, humorous, intelligent, kindly, that always brightened flatteringly when they met you; and a vast quantity of bluish-grey hair and beard. In his dress he affected (very wisely, for they became him excellently) velvet jackets, flannel shirts, loosely-knotted ties, and wide-brimmed soft felt hats. Marching down the Boulevard St. Michel, his broad shoulders well thrown back, his head erect, chin high in air, his whole person

person radiating health, power, contentment, and the pride of them: he was a sight worth seeing, spirited, picturesque, prepossessing. You could not have passed him without noticing him—without wondering who he was, confident he was somebody—without admiring him, and feeling that there went a man it would be interesting to know.

He was, indeed, charming to know; he was the hero, the idol, of a little sect of worshippers, young fellows who loved nothing better than to sit at his feet. On the Rive Gauche, to be sure, we are, for the most part, birds of passage; a student arrives, tarries a little, then departs. So, with the exits and entrances of seniors and *nouveaux*, the personnel of old Childe's following varied from season to season; but numerically it remained pretty much the same. He had a studio, with a few living-rooms attached, somewhere up in the fastnesses of Montparnasse, though it was seldom thither that one went to seek him. He received at his café, the Café Bleu—the Café Bleu which has since blown into the monster café of the Quarter, the noisiest, the rowdiest, the most flamboyant. But I am writing (alas) of twelve, thirteen, fifteen years ago; in those days the Café Bleu consisted of a single oblong room—with a sanded floor, a dozen tables, and two waiters, Eugène and Hippolyte—where Madame Chanve, the *patronne*, in lofty insulation behind her counter, reigned, if you please, but where Childe, her principal client, governed. The bottom of the shop, at any rate, was reserved exclusively to his use. There he dined, wrote his letters, dispensed his hospitalities; he had his own piano there, if you can believe me, his foils and boxing-gloves; from the absinthe hour till bed-time there was his habitat, his den. And woe to the passing stranger who, mistaking the Café Bleu for an ordinary house of call, ventured, during that consecrated period, to drop in. Nothing would be said, nothing done; we would not even trouble to stare at the intruder. Yet he would seldom stop to finish his consommation, or he would bolt it. He would feel something in the air; he would know he was out of place. He would fidget a little, frown a little, and get up meekly, and slink into the street. Human magnetism is such a subtle force. And Madame Chanve didn't mind in the least; she preferred a bird in the hand to a brace in the bush. From half a dozen to a score of us dined at her long table every evening; as many more drank her appetisers in the afternoon, and came again at night for grog or coffee. You see, it was a sort of club, a club of which Childe was at once the chairman and the object. If we had had a written constitution, it must have begun: "The purpose of this association is the enjoyment of the society of Alfred Childe."

Ah, those afternoons, those dinners, those ambrosial nights! If the weather was kind, of course, we would begin our session on the *terrasse*, sipping our vermouth, puffing our cigarettes, laughing our laughs, tossing hither and thither our light ball of gossip, vaguely conscious of the perpetual ebb and flow and murmur of people in the Boulevard, while the setting sun turned Paris to a marvellous water-colour, all pale lucent tints, amber and alabaster and mother-of-pearl, with amethystine shadows. Then, one by one, those of us who were dining elsewhere would slip away; and at a sign from Hippolyte the others would move indoors, and take their places down either side of the long narrow table, Childe at the head, his daughter Nina next him. And presently with what a clatter of knives and forks, clinking of glasses and babble of human voices, the Café Bleu would echo. Madame Chanve's kitchen was not a thing to boast of, and her price, for the Latin Quarter, was rather high—I think we paid three francs, wine included, which would be for most of us distinctly a *prix-de-luxe*.

de-luxe. But oh, it was such fun; we were so young; Childe was so delightful. The fun was best, of course, when we were few, and could all sit up near to him, and none need lose a word. When we were many there would be something like a scramble for good seats.

I ask myself whether, if I could hear him again to-day, I should think his talk as wondrous as I thought it then. Then I could thrill at the verse of Musset, and linger lovingly over the prose of Théophile, I could laugh at the wit of Gustave Droz, and weep at the pathos . . . . it costs me a pang to own it, but yes, I'm afraid . . . . I could weep at the pathos of Henry Mürger; and these have all suffered such a sad sea-change since. So I could sit, hour after hour, in a sort of ecstasy, listening to the talk of Nina's father. It flowed from him like wine from a full measure, easily, smoothly, abundantly. He had a ripe, genial voice, and an enunciation that made crystals of his words; whilst his range of subjects was as wide as the earth and the sky. He would talk to you of God and man, of metaphysics, ethics, the last new play, murder, or change of ministry; of books, of pictures, specifically, or of the general principles of literature and painting; of people, of sunsets, of Italy, of the high seas, of the Paris streets—of what, in fine, you pleased. Or he would spin you yarns, sober, farcical, veridical, or invented. And, with transitions infinitely rapid, he would be serious, jocose—solemn, ribald—earnest, flippant—logical, whimsical, turn and turn about. And in every sentence, in its form or in its substance, he would wrap a surprise for you—it was the unexpected word, the unexpected assertion, sentiment, conclusion, that constantly arrived. Meanwhile it would enhance your enjoyment mightily to watch his physiognomy, the movements of his great, grey, shaggy head, the lightening and darkening of his eyes, his smile, his frown, his

his occasional slight shrug or gesture. But the oddest thing was this, that he could take as well as give; he could listen—surely a rare talent in a monologist. Indeed, I have never known a man who could make *you* feel so interesting.

After dinner he would light an immense brown meerschaum pipe, and smoke for a quarter-hour or so in silence; then he would play a game or two of chess with some one; and by and by he would open his piano, and sing to us till midnight.

IV

I speak of him as old, and indeed we always called him Old Childe among ourselves; yet he was barely fifty. Nina, when I first made their acquaintance, must have been a girl of sixteen or seventeen; though—tall, with an amply rounded, mature-seeming figure—if one had judged from her appearance, one would have fancied her three or four years older. For that matter, she looked then very much as she looks now; I can perceive scarcely any alteration. She had the same dark hair, gathered up in a big smooth knot behind, and breaking into a tumult of little ringlets over her forehead; the same clear, sensitive complexion; the same rather large, full-lipped mouth, tip-tilted nose, soft chin, and merry, mischievous eyes. She moved in the same way, with the same leisurely, almost lazy grace, that could, however, on occasions, quicken to an alert, elastic vivacity; she had the same voice, a trifle deeper than most women's, and of a quality never so delicately nasal, which made it racy and characteristic; the same fresh, ready laughter. There was something arch, something a little sceptical, a little quizzical, in her expression, as if, perhaps she

she was disposed to take the world, more or less, with a grain of salt; at the same time there was something rich, warm-blooded, luxurious, suggesting that she would know how to savour its pleasantnesses with complete enjoyment. But if you felt that she was by way of being the least bit satirical in her view of things, you felt too that she was altogether good-natured, and even that, at need, she could show herself spontaneously kind, generous, devoted. And if you inferred that her temperament inclined rather towards the sensuous than the ascetic, believe me, it did not lessen her attractiveness.

At the time of which I am writing now, the sentiment that reigned between Nina and Old Childe's retinue of young men was chiefly an *esprit-de-corps*. Later on we all fell in love with her; but for the present we were simply amiably fraternal. We were united to her by a common enthusiasm; we were fellow-celebrants at her ancestral altar—or, rather, she was the high priestess there, we were her acolytes. For, with her, filial piety did in very truth partake of the nature of religion; she really, literally, idolised her father. One only needed to watch her for three minutes, as she sat beside him, to understand the depth and ardour of her emotion: how she adored him, how she admired him and believed in him, how proud of him she was, how she rejoiced in him. "Oh, you think you know my father," I remember her saying to us once. "Nobody knows him. Nobody is great enough to know him. If people knew him they would fall down and kiss the ground he walks on." It is certain she deemed him the wisest, the noblest, the handsomest, the most gifted, of human kind. That little gleam of mockery in her eye died out instantly when she looked at him, when she spoke of him or listened to him; instead, there came a tender light of love, and her face grew pale with the fervour of her affection. Yet, when he

he jested, no one laughed more promptly or more heartily than she. In those days I was perpetually trying to write fiction; and Old Childe was my inveterate hero. I forget in how many ineffectual manuscripts, under what various dread disguises, he was afterwards reduced to ashes; I am afraid, in one case, a scandalous distortion of him got abroad in print. Publishers are sometimes ill-advised; and thus the indiscretions of our youth may become the confusions of our age. The thing was in three volumes, and called itself a novel; and of course the fatuous author had to make a bad business worse by presenting a copy to his victim. I shall never forget the look Nina gave me when I asked her if she had read it; I grow hot even now as I recall it. I had waited and waited, expecting her compliments; and at last I could wait no longer, and so asked her; and she answered me with a look! It was weeks, I am not sure it wasn't months, before she took me back to her good graces. But Old Childe was magnanimous; he sent me a little pencil-drawing of his head, inscribed in the corner, "To Frankenstein from his Monster."

V

It was a queer life for a girl to live, that happy-go-lucky life of the Latin Quarter, lawless and unpremeditated, with a café for her school-room, and none but men for comrades; but Nina liked it; and her father had a theory in his madness. He was a Bohemian, not in pratice only, but in principle; he preached Bohemianism as the most rational manner of existence, maintaining that it developed what was intrinsic and authentic in one's character, saved one from the artificial, and brought one into immediate contact

contact with the realities of the world; and he protested he could see no reason why a human being should be "cloistered and contracted" because of her sex. "What would not hurt my son, if I had one, will not hurt my daughter. It will make a man of her—without making her the less a woman." So he took her with him to the Café Bleu, and talked in her presence quite as freely as he might have talked had she been absent. As, in the greater number of his theological, political, and social convictions, he was exceedingly unorthodox, she heard a good deal, no doubt, that most of us would scarcely consider edifying for our daughters' ears; but he had his system, he knew what he was about. "The question whether you can touch pitch and remain undefiled," he said, "depends altogether upon the spirit in which you approach it. The realities of the world, the realities of life, the real things of God's universe—what have we eyes for, if not to envisage them? Do so fearlessly, honestly, with a clean heart, and, man or woman, you can only be the better for it." Perhaps his system was a shade too simple, a shade too obvious, for this complicated planet; but he held to it in all sincerity. It was in pursuance of the same system, I daresay, that he taught Nina to fence, and to read Latin and Greek, as well as to play the piano, and turn an omelette. She could ply a foil against the best of us.

And then, quite suddenly, he died.

I think it was in March, or April; anyhow, it was a premature spring-like day, and he had left off his overcoat. That evening he went to the Odéon, and when, after the play, he joined us for supper at the Bleu, he said he thought he had caught a cold, and ordered hot grog. The next day he did not turn up at all; so several of us, after dinner, presented ourselves at his lodgings in Montparnasse. We found him in bed, with Nina reading to him. He

He was feverish, and Nina had insisted that he should stop at home. He would be all right to-morrow. He scoffed at our suggestion that he should see a doctor; he was one of those men who affect to despise the medical profession. But early on the following morning a commissionnaire brought me a note from Nina. "My father is very much worse. Can you come at once?" He was delirious. Poor Nina, white, with frightened eyes, moved about like one distracted. We sent off for Dr. Rénoult, we had in a Sister of Charity. Everything that could be done was done. Till the very end, none of us for a moment doubted he would recover. It was impossible to conceive that that strong, affirmative life could be extinguished. And even after the end had come, the end with its ugly suite of material circumstances, I don't think any of us realised what it meant. It was as if we had been told that one of the forces of Nature had become inoperative. And Nina, through it all, was like some pale thing in marble, that breathed and moved: white, dazed, helpless, with aching, incredulous eyes, suffering everything, understanding nothing.

When it came to the worst of the dreadful necessary businesses that followed, some of us, somehow, managed to draw her from the death-chamber into another room, and to keep her there, while others of us got it over. It was snowing that afternoon, I remember, a melancholy, hesitating snowstorm, with large moist flakes, that fluttered down irresolutely, and presently disintegrated into rain; but we had not far to go. Then we returned to Nina, and for many days and nights we never dare to leave her. You will guess whether the question of her future, especially of her immediate future, weighed heavily upon our minds. In the end, however, it appeared to have solved itself—though I can't pretend that the solution was exactly all we could have wished.

Her

Her father had a half-brother (we learned this from his papers), incumbent of rather an important living in the north of England. We also learned that the brothers had scarcely seen each other twice in a score of years, and had kept up only the most fitful correspondence. Nevertheless, we wrote to the clergyman, describing the sad case of his niece; and in reply we got a letter, addressed to Nina herself, saying that of course she must come at once to Yorkshire, and consider the rectory her home. I don't need to recount the difficulties we had in explaining to her, in persuading her. I have known few more painful moments than that when, at the Gare du Nord, half a dozen of us established the poor, benumbed, bewildered child in her compartment, and sent her, with our godspeed, alone upon her long journey—to her strange kindred, and the strange conditions of life she would have to encounter among them. From the Café Bleu to a Yorkshire parsonage! And Nina's was not by any means a neutral personality, nor her mind a blank sheet of paper. She had a will of her own; she had convictions, aspirations, traditions, prejudices, which she would hold to with enthusiasm because they had been her father's, because her father had taught them to her; and she had manners, habits, tastes. She would be sure to horrify the people she was going to; she would be sure to resent their criticism, their slightest attempt at interference. Oh, my heart was full of misgivings; yet—she had no money, she was eighteen years old—what else could we advise her to do? All the same, her face, as it looked down upon us from the window of her railway carriage, white, with big terrified eyes fixed in a gaze of blank uncomprehending anguish, kept rising up to reproach me for weeks afterwards. I had her on my conscience as if I had personally wronged her.

It

VI

It was characteristic of her that, during her absence, she hardly wrote to us. She is of far too hasty and impetuous a nature to take kindly to the task of letter-writing; her moods are too inconstant; her thoughts, her fancies, supersede one another too rapidly. Anyhow, beyond the telegram we had made her promise to send, announcing her safe arrival, the most favoured of us got nothing more than an occasional scrappy note, if he got so much; while the greater number of the long epistles some of us felt in duty bound to address to her, elicited not even the semblance of an acknowledgment. Hence, about the particulars of her experience we were quite in the dark, though of its general features we were informed, succinctly, in a big, dashing, uncompromising hand, that she "hated" them.

VII

I am not sure whether it was late in April or early in May that Nina left us. But one day towards the middle of October, coming home from the restaurant where I had lunched, I found in my letter-box in the concierge's room two half-sheets of paper, folded, with the corners turned down, and my name superscribed in pencil. The handwriting startled me a little—and yet, no, it was impossible. Then I hastened to unfold and read, and of course it was the impossible which had happened.

"Mon cher, I am sorry not to find you at home, but I'll wait at the café at the corner till half-past twelve. It is now midi juste."

That

That was the first. The second ran: "I have waited till a quarter to one. Now I am going to the Bleu for luncheon. I shall be there till three." And each was signed with the initials, N. C.

It was not yet two, so I had plenty of time. But you will believe that I didn't loiter on that account. I dashed out of the *loge*—into the street—down the Boulevard St. Michel—into the Bleu, breathlessly. At the far end Nina was seated before a marble table, with Madame Chanve in smiles and tears beside her. I heard a little cry; I felt myself seized and enveloped for a moment by something like a whirlwind—oh, but a very pleasant whirlwind, warm and fresh, and fragrant of violets; I received two vigorous kisses, one on either cheek; and then I was held off at arm's length, and examined by a pair of laughing eyes.

And at last a voice—rather a deep voice for a woman's, with just a crisp edge to it, that might have been called slightly nasal, but was agreeable and individual—a voice said: "En voilà assez. Come and sit down."

She had finished her luncheon, and was taking coffee; and if the whole truth must he told, I'm afraid she was taking it with a *petit-verre* and a cigarette. She wore an exceedingly simple black frock, with a bunch of violets in her breast, and a hat with a sweeping black feather and a daring brim. Her dark luxurious hair broke into a riot of fluffy little curls about her forehead, and thence waved richly away to where it was massed behind; her cheeks glowed with a lovely colour (thanks, doubtless to Yorkshire breezes; sweet are the uses of adversity); her eyes sparkled; her lips curved in a perpetual play of smiles, letting her delicate little teeth show themselves furtively; and suddenly I realised that this girl, whom I had never thought of save as one might think of one's younger sister, suddenly I realised that she was a woman, and

and a radiantly, perhaps even a dangerously handsome woman. I saw suddenly that she was not merely an attribute, an aspect of another, not merely Alfred Childe's daughter; she was a personage in herself, a personage to be reckoned with.

This sufficiently obvious perception came upon me with such force, and brought me such emotion, that I dare say for a little while I sat vacantly staring at her, with an air of preoccupation. Anyhow, all at once she laughed, and cried out, "Well, when you get back . . . ?" and, "Perhaps," she questioned, "perhaps you think it polite to go off wool-gathering like that?" Whereupon I recovered myself with a start, and laughed too.

"But say that you are surprised, say that you are glad, at least," she went on.

Surprised! glad! But what did it mean? What was it all about?

"I couldn't stand it any longer, that's all. I have come home. Oh, que c'est bon, que c'est bon, que c'est bon!"

"And—England?—Yorkshire?—your people?"

"Don't speak of it. It was a bad dream. It is over. It brings bad luck to speak of bad dreams. I have forgotten it. I am here—in Paris—at home. Oh, que c'est bon!" And she smiled blissfully through eyes filled with tears.

Don't tell me that happiness is an illusion. It is her habit, if you will, to flee before us and elude us; but sometimes, sometimes we catch up with her, and can hold her for long moments warm against our hearts.

"Oh, mon père! It is enough—to be here, where he lived, where he worked, where he was happy," Nina murmured afterwards.

She had arrived the night before; she had taken a room in the Hôtel d'Espagne, in the Rue de Médicis, opposite the Luxembourg Garden. I was as yet the only member of the old set she had

had looked up. Of course I knew where she had gone first —but not to cry—to kiss it—to place flowers on it. She could not cry—not now. She was too happy, happy, happy. Oh, to be back in Paris, her home, where she had lived with him, where every stick and stone was dear to her because of him!

Then, glancing up at the clock, with an abrupt change of key, "Mais allons donc, paresseux!—You must take me to see the camarades. You must take me to see Chalks."

And in the street she put her arm through mine, laughing and saying, "On nous croira fiancés." She did not walk, she tripped, she all but danced beside me, chattering joyously in alternate French and English. "I could stop and kiss them all—the men, the women, the very pavement. Oh, Paris! Oh, these good, gay, kind Parisians! Look at the sky! look at the view—down that impasse—the sunlight and shadows on the houses, the doorways, the people. Oh, the air! Oh, the smells! Que c'est bon —que je suis contente! Et dire que j'ai passé cinq mois, mais cinq grands mois, en Angleterre. Ah, veinard, you—you don't know how you're blessed." Presently we found ourselves labouring knee-deep in a wave of black pinafores, and Nina had plucked her bunch of violets from her breast, and was dropping them amongst eager fingers and rosy cherubic smiles. And it was constantly, "Tiens, there's Madame Chose in her kiosque. Bonjour madame. Vous allez toujours bien?" and "Oh, look! old Perronet standing before his shop in his shirt-sleeves, exactly as he has stood at this hour every day, winter or summer, these ten years. Bonjour, M'sieu Perronet." And you may be sure that the kindly French Choses and Perronets returned her greetings with beaming faces. "Ah, mademoiselle, que c'est bon de vous revoir ainsi. Que vous avez bonne mine!" "It is so strange,' she

she said, "to find nothing changed. To think that everything has gone on quietly in the usual way. As if I hadn't spent an eternity in exile!" And at the corner of one street, before a vast flaunting "bazaar," with a prodigality of tawdry Oriental wares exhibited on the pavement, and little black shopmen trailing like beetles in and out amongst them, "Oh," she cried, "the 'Mecque du Quartier'! To think that I could weep for joy at seeing the 'Mecque du Quartier'!"

By and by we plunged into a dark hallway, climbed a long unsavoury corkscrew staircase, and knocked at a door. A gruff voice having answered, "'Trez!" we entered Chalks's bare, bleak, paint-smelling studio. He was working (from a lay-figure) with his back towards us; and he went on working for a minute or two after our arrival, without speaking. Then he demanded, in sort of grunt, "Eh bien, qu'est ce que c'est?" always without pausing in his work or looking round. Nina gave two little *ahems*, tense with suppressed mirth; and slowly, indifferently, Chalks turned an absent-minded face in our direction. But, next instant, there was a shout—a rush—a confusion of forms in the middle of the floor—and I realised that I was not the only one to be honoured by a kiss and an embrace. "Oh, you're covering me with paint," Nina protested suddenly; and indeed he had forgotten to drop his brush and palette, and great dabs of colour were clinging to her cloak. While he was doing penance, scrubbing the garment with rags soaked in turpentine, he kept shaking his head, and murmuring, from time to time, as he glanced up at her, "Well, I'll be dumned."

"It's very nice and polite of you, Chalks," she said, by and by, "a very graceful concession to my sex. But, if you think it would relieve you once for all, you have my full permission to pronounce it —amned."

Chalks

Chalks did no more work that afternoon; and that evening, quite twenty of us dined at Madame Chanve's; and it was almost like old times.

VIII

"Oh, yes," she explained to me afterwards, "my uncle is a good man. My aunt and cousins are very good women. But for me to live with them—pas possible, mon cher. Their thoughts were not my thoughts, we could not speak the same language. They disapproved of me unutterably. They suffered agonies, poor things. Oh, they were very kind, very patient. But——! My gods were their devils. My father—my great, grand, splendid father—was 'poor Alfred,' 'poor uncle Alfred.' Que voulez-vous? And then—the life, the society! The parishioners—the people who came to tea—the houses where we sometimes dined! Are you interested in crops? In the preservation of game? In the diseases of cattle? Olàlà! (C'est bien le cas de s'en servir, de cette expression-là.) Olàlà, làlà! And then—have you ever been homesick? Oh, I longed, I pined, for Paris, as one suffocating would long, would die, for air. Enfin, I could not stand it any longer. They thought it wicked to smoke cigarettes. My poor aunt—when she smelt cigarette-smoke in my bed-room! Oh, her face! I had to sneak away, behind the shrubbery at the end of the garden, for stealthy whiffs. And it was impossible to get French tobacco. At last I took the bull by the horns, and fled. It will have been a terrible shock for them. But better one good blow than endless little ones; better a lump-sum, than instalments with interest."

But what was she going to do? How was she going to live? For,

for, after all, much as she loved Paris, she couldn't subsist on its air and sunshine.

"Oh, never fear! I'll manage somehow. I'll not die of hunger," she said confidently.

IX

And, sure enough, she managed very well. She gave music lessons to the children of the Quarter, and English lessons to clerks and shop-girls; she did a little translating; she would pose now and then for a painter friend—she was the original, for instance, of Norton's "Woman Dancing," which you know. She even—thanks to the employment by Chalks of what he called his "in*floo*ence"—she even contributed a weekly column of Paris gossip to the *Palladium*, a newspaper published at Battle Creek, Michigan, U.S.A., Chalks's native town. "Put in lots about me, and talk as if there were only two important centres of civilisation on earth, Battle Crick and Parus, and it'll be a boom," Chalks said. We used to have great fun, concocting those columns of Paris gossip. Nina, indeed, held the pen and cast a deciding vote; but we all collaborated. And we put in lots about Chalks—perhaps rather more than he had bargained for. With an irony (we trusted) too subtle to be suspected by the good people of Battle Creek, we would introduce their illustrious fellow-citizen, casually, between the Pope and the President of the Republic; we would sketch him as he strolled in the Boulevard arm-in-arm with Monsieur Meissonier, as he dined with the Perpetual Secretary of the French Academy, or drank his bock in the afternoon with the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour; we

we would compose solemn descriptive criticisms of his works, which almost made us die of laughing; we would interview him —at length—about any subject; we would give elaborate bulletins of his health, and brilliant pen-pictures of his toilets. Sometimes we would betroth him, marry him, divorce him; sometimes, when our muse impelled us to a particularly daring flight, we would insinuate, darkly, sorrowfully, that perhaps the great man's morals—— But no! We were persuaded that rumour accused him falsely. The story that he had been seen dancing at Bullier's with the notorious Duchesse de Z—— was a baseless fabrication. Unprincipled? Oh, we were nothing if not unprincipled. And our pleasure was so exquisite, and it worried our victim so. "I suppose you think it's funny, don't you?" he used to ask, with a feint of superior scorn which put its fine flower to our hilarity. "Look out, or you'll bust," he would warn us, the only unconvulsed member present. "By gum, you're easily amused." We always wrote of him respectfully as Mr. Charles K. Smith; we never faintly hinted at his sobriquet. We would have rewarded liberally, at that time, any one who could have told us what the K stood for. We yearned to unite the cryptic word to his surname by a hyphen; the mere abstract notion of doing so filled us with fearful joy. Chalks was right, I dare say; we were easily amused. And Nina, at these moments of literary frenzy—I can see her now: her head bent over the manuscript, her hair in some disarray, a spiral of cigarette-smoke winding ceilingward from between the fingers of her idle hand, her lips parted, her eyes gleaming with mischievous inspirations, her face pale with the intensity of her glee. I can see her as she would look up, eagerly, to listen to somebody's suggestion, or as she would motion to us to be silent, crying, "Attendez—I've got an idea." Then her pen would dash swiftly, noisily, over her paper for a little, whilst we

we all waited expectantly; and at last she would lean back, drawing a long breath, and tossing the pen aside, to read her paragraph out to us.

In a word, she managed very well, and by no means died of hunger. She could scarcely afford Madame Chanve's three-franc table d'hôte, it is true; but we could dine modestly at Léons, over the way, and return the Bleu for coffee,—though, it must be added, that establishment no longer enjoyed a monopoly of our custom. We patronised it and the Vachette, the Source, the Ecoles, the Souris, indifferently. Or we would sometimes spend our evenings in Nina's rooms. She lived in a tremendously swagger house in the Avenue de l'Observatoire—on the sixth floor, to be sure, but "there was a carpet all the way up." She had a charming little salon, with her own furniture and piano (the same that had formerly embellished our café), and no end of books, pictures, draperies, and pretty things, inherited from her father or presented by her friends.

By this time the inevitable had happened, and we were all in love with her—hopelessly, resignedly so, and without internecine rancour, for she treated us, indiscriminately, with a serene, impartial, tolerant derision; but we were savagely, luridly, jealous and suspicious of all new-comers and of all outsiders. If *we* could not win her, no one else should; and we formed ourselves round her in a ring of fire. Oh, the maddening mock-sentimental, mock-sympathetic face she would pull, when one of us ventured to sigh to her of his passion! The way she would lift her eyebrows, and gaze at you with a travesty of pity, shaking her head pensively, and murmuring, "Mon pauvre ami! Only fancy!" And then how the imp, lurking in the corners of her eyes, with only the barest pretence of trying to conceal himself, would suddenly leap forth in a peal of laughter! She had lately read

 Mr. Howells's

Mr. Howells's "Undiscovered Country," and had adopted the Shakers' paraphrase for love: "Feeling foolish."—"Feeling pretty foolish to-day, air ye, gentlemen?" she inquired, mimicking the dialect of Chalks. "Well, I guess you just ain't feeling any more foolish than you look!"—If she would but have taken us seriously! And the worst of it was that we knew she was anything but temperamentally cold. Chalks formulated the potentialities we divined in her, when he remarked, regretfully, wistfully, as he often did, "She could love like Hell." Once, in a reckless moment, he even went so far as to tell her this point-blank. "Oh, naughty Chalks!" she remonstrated, shaking her finger at him. "Do you think that's a pretty word? But—I dare say I could."

"All the same, Lord help the man you marry," Chalks continued gloomily.

"Oh, I shall never marry," Nina cried. "Because, first, I don't approve of matrimony as an institution. And then—as you say—Lord help my husband. I should be such an uncomfortable wife. So capricious, and flighty, and tantalising, and unsettling, and disobedient, and exacting, and everything. Oh, but a horrid wife! No, I shall never marry. Marriage is quite too out-of-date. I shan't marry; but if I ever meet a man and love him—ah!" She placed two fingers upon her lips, and kissed them, and waved the kiss to the skies.

This fragment of conversation passed in the Luxembourg Garden; and the three or four of us by whom she was accompanied glared threateningly at our mental image of that not-impossible upstart whom she might some day meet and love. We were sure, of course, that he would be a beast; we hated him not merely because he would have cut us out with her, but because he would be so distinctly our inferior, so hopelessly unworthy

unworthy of her, so helplessly incapable of appreciating her. I think we conceived of him as tall, with drooping fair moustaches, and contemptibly meticulous in his dress. He would probably not be of the Quarter; he would sneer at *us*.

"He'll not understand her, he'll not respect her. Take her peculiar views. We know where she gets them. But he—he'll despise her for them, at the very time he's profiting by 'em," some one said.

Her peculiar views of the institution of matrimony, the speaker meant. She had got them from her father. "The relations of the sexes should be as free as friendship," he had taught. "If a man and a woman love each other, it is nobody's business but their own. Neither the Law nor Society can, with any show of justice, interfere. That they do interfere, is a survival of feudalism, a survival of the system under which the individual, the subject, had no liberty, no rights. If a man and a woman love each other, they should be as free to determine for themselves the character, extent, and duration of their intercourse, as two friends should be. If they wish to live together under the same roof, let them. If they wish to retain their separate domiciles, let them. If they wish to cleave to each other till death severs them—if they wish to part on the morrow of their union—let them, by heaven. But the couple who go before a priest or a magistrate, and bind themselves in ceremonial marriage, are serving to perpetuate tyranny, are insulting the dignity of human nature." Such was the gospel which Nina had absorbed (don't, for goodness' sake, imagine that I approve of it because I cite it), and which she professed in entire good faith. We felt that the coming man would misapprehend both it and her—though he would not hesitate to make a convenience of it. Ugh, the cynic!

We

We formed ourselves round her in a ring of fire, hoping to frighten the beast away. But we were miserably, fiercely anxious, suspicious, jealous. We were jealous of everything in the shape of a man that came into any sort of contact with her: of the men who passed her in the street or rode with her in the omnibus; of the little *employés de commerce* to whom she gave English lessons; of everybody. I fancy we were always more or less uneasy in our minds when she was out of our sight. Who could tell what might be happening? With those lips of hers, those eyes of hers—oh, we knew how she could love: Chalks had said it. Who could tell what might already have happened? Who could tell that the coming man had not already come? She was entirely capable of concealing him from us. Sometimes, in the evening, she would seem absent, preoccupied. How could we be sure that she wasn't thinking of him? Savouring anew the hours she had passed with him that very day? Or dreaming of those she had promised him for to-morrow? If she took leave of us—might he not be waiting to join her round the corner? If she spent an evening away from us. . . . .

And she—she only laughed; laughed at our jealousy, our fears, our precautions, as she laughed at our hankering flame. Not a laugh that reassured us, though; an inscrutable, enigmatic laugh, that might have covered a multitude of sins. She had taken to calling us collectively *Loulou:* "Ah, le pauv' Loulou—so now he has the pretension to be jealous." Then she would be interrupted by a paroxysm of laughter; after which, "Oh, qu'il est drôle," she would gasp. "Pourvu qu'il ne devienne pas gênant!"

It was all very well to laugh; but some of us, our personal equation quite apart, could not help feeling that the joke was of a precarious quality, that the situation held tragic possibilities. A young

young and attractive girl, by no means constitutionally insusceptible, and imbued with heterodox ideas of marriage—alone in the Latin Quarter.

X

I have heard it maintained that the man has yet to be born, who, in his heart of hearts if he comes to think the matter over, won't find himself at something of a loss to conceive why any given woman should experience the passion of love for any other man; that a woman's choice, to all men save the chosen, is, by its very nature, as incomprehensible as the postulates of Hegel. But, in Nina's case, even when I regard it from this distance of time, I still feel, as we all felt then, that the mystery was more than ordinarily obscure. We had fancied ourselves prepared for anything; the only thing we weren't prepared for was the thing that befell. We had expected "him" to be offensive, and he wasn't. He was, quite simply, insignificant. He was a South American, a Brazilian, a member of the School of Mines: a poor, undersized, pale, spiritless, apologetic creature, with rather a Teutonic-looking name, Ernest Mayer. His father, or uncle, was Minister of Agriculture, or Commerce, or something, in his native land; and he himself was attached in some nominal capacity to the Brazilian Legation, in the Rue de Téhéran, whence, on State occasions, he enjoyed the privilege, of enveloping his meagre little person in a very gorgeous diplomatic uniform. He was beardless, with vague features, timid light-blue eyes, and a bluish anæmic skin. In manner he was nervous, tremulous, deprecatory—perpetually bowing, wriggling, stepping back to let you pass, waving his hands, palms outward, as if to protest against giving you trouble. And

And in speech—upon my word, I don't think I ever heard him compromise himself by any more dangerous assertion than that the weather was fine, or he wished you good-day. For the most part he listened mutely, with a flickering, perfunctory smile. From time to time, with an air of casting fear behind him and dashing into the imminent deadly breach, he would hazard an "Ah, oui," or a "Pas mal." For the rest, he played the piano prettily enough, wrote colourless, correct French verse, and was reputed to be an industrious if not a brilliant student—what we called *un sérieux*.

It was hard to believe that beautiful, sumptuous Nina Childe, with her wit, her humour, her imagination, loved this neutral little fellow; yet she made no secret of doing so. We tried to frame a theory that would account for it. "It's the maternal instinct," suggested one. "It's her chivalry," said another; "she's the sort of woman who could never be very violently interested by a man of her own size. She would need one she could look up to, or else one she could protect and pat on the head." "'God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with, one to show a woman when he loves her,'" quoted a third. "Perhaps Coco"—we had nicknamed him Coco—"has luminous qualities that we don't dream of, to which he gives the rein when they're *à deux*."

Anyhow, if we were mortified that she should have preferred such a one to us, we were relieved to think that she hadn't fallen into the clutches of a blackguard, as we had feared she would. That Coco was a blackguard we never guessed. We made the best of him, because we had to choose between doing that and seeing less of Nina; in time, I am afraid—such is the influence of habit—we rather got to like him, as one gets to like any innocuous, customary thing. And if we did not like the situation —for

—for none of us, whatever may have been our practice, shared Nina's hereditary theories anent the sexual conventions—we recognised that we couldn't alter it, and we shrugged our shoulders resignedly, trusting it might be no worse.

And then, one day, she announced, "Ernest and I are going to be married." And when we cried out why, she explained that—despite her own conviction that marriage was a barbarous institution—she felt, in the present state of public opinion, people owed legitimacy to their children. So Ernest, who, according to both French and Brazilian law, could not, at his age, marry without his parents' consent, was going home to procure it. He would sail next week; he would be back before three months. Ernest sailed from Lisbon; and the post, a day or two after he was safe at sea, brought Nina a letter from him. It was a wild, hysterical, remorseful letter, in which he called himself every sort of name. He said his parents would never dream of letting him marry her. They were Catholics, they were very devout, they had prejudices, they had old-fashioned notions. Besides, he had been as good as affianced to a lady of their election ever since he was born. He was going home to marry his second cousin.

XI

Shortly after the birth of Camille I had to go to London, and it was nearly a year before I came back to Paris. Nina was looking better than when I had left, but still in nowise like her old self—pale and worn and worried, with a smile that was the ghost of her former one. She had been waiting for my return, she said, to have a long talk with me. "I have made a little plan. I want

I want you to advise me. Of course you must advise me to stick to it."

And when we had reached her lodgings, and were alone in the salon, "It is about Camille, it is about her bringing-up," she explained. "The Latin Quarter? It is all very well for you, for me; but for a growing child? Oh, my case was different; I had my father. But Camille? Restaurants, cafés, studios, the Boul' Miche, and this little garret—do they form a wholesome environment? Oh, no, no—I am not a renegade. I am a Bohemian; I shall always be; it is bred in the bone. But my daughter—ought she not to have the opportunity, at least, of being different, of being like other girls? You see, I had my father; she will have only me. And I distrust myself; I have no 'system.' Shall I not do better, then, to adopt the system of the world? To give her the conventional education, the conventional 'advantages'? A home, what they call home influences. Then, when she has grown up, she can choose for herself. Besides, there is the question of francs and centimes. I have been able to earn a living for myself, it is true. But even that is more difficult now; I can give less time to work; I am in debt. And we are two; and our expenses must naturally increase from year to year. And I should like to be able to put something aside. Hand-to-mouth is a bad principle when you have a growing child."

After a little pause she went on: "So my problem is, first, how to earn our livelihood, and, secondly, how to make something like a home for Camille, something better than this tobacco-smoky, absinthe-scented atmosphere of the Latin Quarter. And I can see only one way of accomplishing the two things. You will smile—but I have considered it from every point of view. I have examined myself, my own capabilities. I have weighed all the chances.

chances. I wish to take a flat, in another quarter of the town, near the Etoile or the Parc Monceau, and—open a *pension*. There is my plan."

I had a much simpler and pleasanter plan of my own, but of that, as I knew, she would hear nothing. I did not smile at hers, however; though I confess it was not easy to imagine madcap Nina in the rôle of a landlady, regulating the accounts and presiding at the table of a boarding-house. I can't pretend that I believed there was the slightest likelihood of her filling it with success. But I said nothing to discourage her; and the fact that she is rich to-day proves how little I divined the resources of her character. For the boarding-house she kept was an exceedingly good boarding-house; she showed herself the most practical of mistresses; and she prospered amazingly. Jeanselme, whose father had recently died, leaving him a fortune, lent her what money she needed to begin with; she took and furnished a flat in the Avenue de l'Alma; and I—I feel quite like an historical personage when I remember that I was her first boarder. Others soon followed me, though, for she had friends amongst all the peoples of the earth—English and Americans, Russians, Italians, Austrians, even Roumanians and Servians, as well as French; and each did what he could to help. At the end of a year she overflowed into the flat above; then into that below; then she acquired the lease of the entire house. She worked tremendously, she was at it early and late, her eyes were everywhere; she set an excellent table; she employed admirable servants; and if her prices were a bit stiff, she gave you your money's worth, and there were no "surprises." It was comfortable and quiet; the street was bright, the neighbourhood convenient. You could dine in the common salle-à-manger if you liked, or in your private sitting-room. And you never saw your landlady except for

for purposes of business. She lived apart, in the entresol, alone with Camille and her body-servant Jeanne. There was the "home" she had set out to make.

Meanwhile another sort of success was steadily thrusting itself upon her—she certainly never went out of her way to seek it; she was much too busy to do that. Such of her old friends as remained in Paris came frequently to see her, and new friends gathered round her. She was beautiful, she was intelligent, responsive, entertaining. In her salon, on a Friday evening, you would meet half the lions that were at large in the town—authors, painters actors, actresses, deputies, even an occasional Cabinet minister. Red ribbons and red rosettes shone from every corner of the room. She had become one of the oligarchs of *la haute Bohème*, she had become one of the celebrities of Paris. It would be tiresome to count the novels, poems, songs, that were dedicated to her, the portraits of her, painted or sculptured, that appeared at the Mirlitons or the Palais de l'Industrie. Numberless were the *partis* who asked her to marry them (I know one, at least, who has returned to the charge again and again), but she only laughed, and vowed she would never marry. I don't say that she has never had her fancies, her experiences; but she has consistently scoffed at marriage. At any rate, she has never affected the least repentance for what some people would call her "fault." Her ideas of right and wrong have undergone very little modification. She was deceived in her estimate of the character of Ernest Mayer, if you please; but she would indignantly deny that there was anything sinful, anything to be ashamed of, in her relations with him. And if, by reason of them, she at one time suffered a good deal of pain, I am sure she accounts Camille an exceeding great compensation. That Camille is her child she would scorn to make a secret. She has scorned to assume the conciliatory title of

of Madame. As plain Mademoiselle, with a daughter, you must take her or leave her. And, somehow, all this has not seemed to make the faintest difference to her *clientèle*, not even to the primmest of the English. I can't think of one of them who did not treat her with deference, like her, and recommend her house.

But *her* house they need recommend no more, for she has sold it. Last spring, when I was in Paris, she told me she was about to do so. "Ouf! I have lived with my nose to the grindstone long enough. I am going to 'retire.'" What money she had saved from season to season, she explained, she had entrusted to her friend Baron C***** for speculation. "He is a wizard, and so I am a rich woman. I shall have an income of something like three thousand pounds, mon cher! Oh, we will roll in it. I have had ten bad years—ten hateful years. You don't know how I have hated it all, this business, this drudgery, this cut-and-dried, methodical existence—moi, enfant de Bohème! But, enfin, it was obligatory. Now we will change all that. Nous reviendrons à nos premières amours. I shall have ten good years—ten years of barefaced pleasure. Then—I will range myself—perhaps. There is the darlingest little house for sale, a sort of châlet, built of red brick, with pointed windows and things, in the Rue de Lisbonne. I shall buy it—furnish it—decorate it. Oh, you will see. I shall have my carriage, I shall have toilets, I shall entertain, I shall give dinners—olàlà! No more boarders, no more bores, cares, responsibilities. Only, my friends and—*life!* I feel like one emerging from ten years in the galleys, ten years of penal servitude. To the Pension Childe—bonsoir!"

"That's all very well for you," her listener complained sombrely. "But for me? Where shall I stop when I come to Paris?"

"With me. You shall be my guest. I will kill you if you ever

ever go elsewhere. You shall pass your old age in a big chair in the best room, and Camille and I will nurse your gout and make herb-tea for you."

"And I shall sit and think of what might have been."

"Yes, we'll indulge all your little foibles. You shall sit and 'feel foolish'—from dawn to dewy eve."

XII

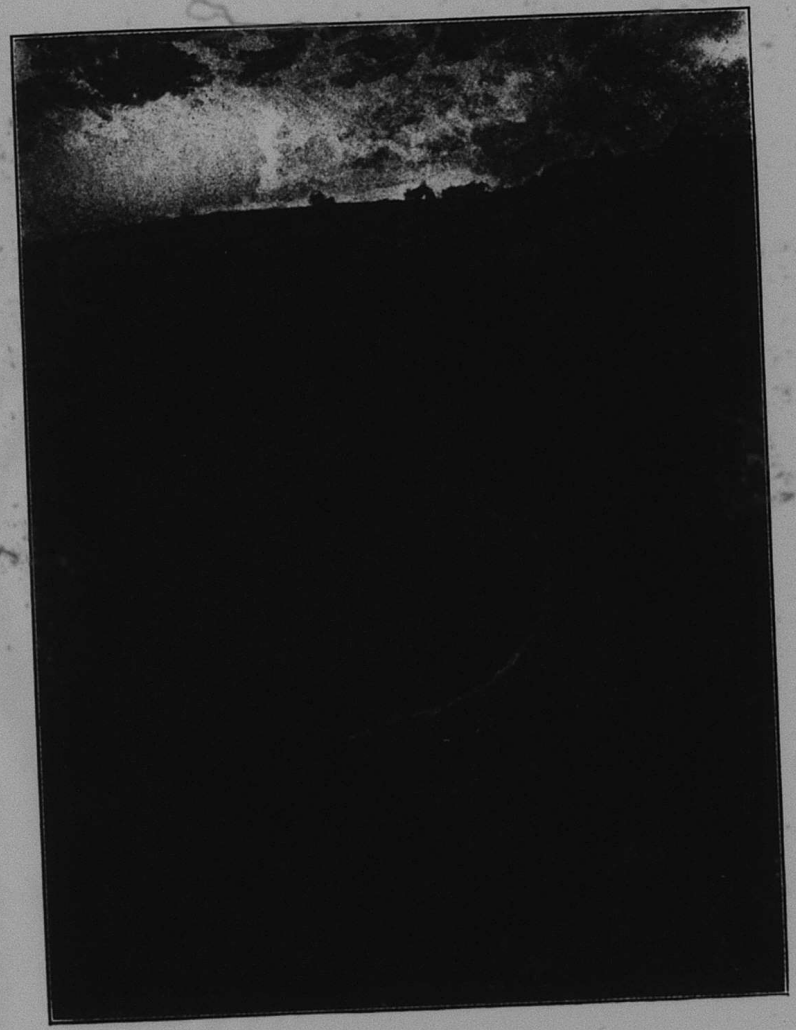
If you had chanced to be walking in the Boi-de-Boulogne this afternoon, you might have seen a smart little basket-phaeton flash past, drawn by two glossy bays, and driven by a woman—a woman with sparkling eyes, a lovely colour, great quantities of soft dark hair, and a figure—

"Hélas, mon père, la taille d'une déesse"—

a smiling woman, in a wonderful blue-grey toilet, grey driving-gloves, and a bold-brimmed grey-felt hat with waving plumes. And in the man beside her you would have recognised your servant. You would have thought me in great luck, perhaps you would have envied me. But—*esse, quam videri!*—I would I were as enviable as I looked.

A Sussex Landscape

By William Hyde



Vespertilia

By Graham R. Tomson

In the late autumn's dusky-golden prime,
When sickles gleam, and rusts the idle plough,
The time of apples dropping from the bough,
And yellow leaves on sycamore and lime.
O'er grassy uplands far above the sea
Often at twilight would my footsteps fare,
And oft I met a stranger-woman there
Who stayed and spake with me:
Hard by the ancient barrow smooth and green,
Whose rounded burg swells dark upon the sky
Lording it high o'er dusky dell and dene,
We wandered—she and I.
Ay, many a time as came the evening hour
And the red moon rose up behind the sheaves,
I found her straying by that barren bower,
Her fair face glimmering like a white wood-flower
That gleams through withered leaves:
Her mouth was redder than the pimpernel,
Her eyes seemed darker than the purple air
'Neath brows half hidden—I remember well—
'Mid mists of cloudy hair.

And

And all about her breast, around her head,
Was wound a wide veil shadowing cheek and chin,
Woven like the ancient grave-gear of the dead:
A twisted clasp and pin
Confined her long blue mantle's heavy fold
Of splendid tissue dropping to decay,
Faded like some rich raiment worn of old,
With rents and tatters gaping to the day.
Her sandals, wrought about with threads of gold,
Scarce held together still, so worn were they,
Yet sewn with winking gems of green and blue,
Where pale as pearls her naked feet shone through.
And all her talk was of some outland rare,
Where myrtles blossom by the blue sea's rim,
And life is ever good and sunny and fair;
"Long since," she sighed, "I sought this island grey.
Here where the wind moans and the sun is dim,
When his beaked galleys cleft the ocean spray,
For love I followed him."

Once, as we stood, we heard the nightingale
Pipe from a thicket on the sheer hillside,
Breathless she hearkened, still and marble-pale,
Then turned to me with strange eyes open wide—
"Now I remember! . . . . Now I know!" said she,
"Love will be life . . . . ah, Love *is* Life!" she cried,
"And thou—thou lovest me?"

I took her chill hands gently in my mine own,
"Dear, but no love is mine to give," I said,
"My heart is colder than the granite stone

That guards my true-love in her grassy bed;
My faith and troth are hers, and hers alone,
Are hers . . . . and she is dead."

Weeping, she drew her veil about her face,
And faint her accents were and dull with pain;
"Poor Vespertilia! gone her days of grace,
Now doth she plead for love—and plead in vain:
None praise her beauty now, or woo her smile!
* * * *
Ah, hadst thou loved me but a little while,
I might have lived again.
Then slowly as a wave along the shore
She glided from me to yon sullen mound;
My frozen heart, relenting, smote me sore—
Too late—I searched the hollow slopes around,
Swiftly I followed her, but nothing found,
Nor saw nor heard her more.

And now, alas, my true-love's memory
Even as a dream of night-time half-forgot,
Fades faint and far from me,
And all my thoughts are of the stranger still,
Yea, though I loved her not:
I loved her not—and yet—I fain would see,
Upon the wind-swept hill,
Her dark veil fluttering in the autumn breeze;
Fain would I hear her changeful voice awhile,
Soft as the wind of spring-tide in the trees,
And watch her slow, sweet smile.

Ever the thought of her abides with me
Unceasing as the murmur of the sea;
When the round moon is low and night-birds flit,
When sink the stubble-fires with smouldering flame,
Over and o'er the sea-wind sighs her name,
And the leaves whisper it.

"*Poor Vespertilia*," sing the grasses sere,
"*Poor Vespertilia*," moans the surf-beat shore;
Almost I feel her very presence near—
Yet she comes nevermore.

The House of Shame

By H. B. Marriott Watson

THERE was no immediate response to his knock, and, ere he rapped again, Farrell turned stupidly and took in a vision of the street. The morning sunshine streamed on Piccadilly; a snap of air shook the tree-tops in the Park; and beyond, the greensward sparkled with dew. The traffic roared along the roadway, but the cabs upon the stand rode like ships at anchor on a windless ocean. Below him flowed the tide of passengers. The dispassion of that drifting scene affected him by contrast with his own warm flood of emotions; the picture—the trees, the sunlight, and the roar—imprinted itself sharply upon his brain. His glance flitted among the faces, and wandered finally to the angle of the crossway, by which his cab was sauntering leisurely. With a shudder he wheeled face-about to the door, and raised the clapper. For a moment yet he stood in hesitation. The current of his thoughts ran like a mill-race, and a hundred discomforting impressions flowed together. The house lay so quiet; the sunlight struck the window-panes with a lively and discordant glare. He put his hand into his pocket and withdrew a latchkey, twiddling it restlessly between his fingers. With a thrust and a twist the door would slip softly open, and he might enter unobserved. He entertained the impulse but a moment. He dared not enter in that

that nocturnal fashion; he would prefer admittance publicly, in the eye of all, as one with nothing to conceal, with no black shame upon him. His return should be ordinary, matter-of-fact; he would choose that Jackson should see him cool and unperturbed. In some way, too, he vaguely hoped to cajole his memory, and to ensnare his willing mind into a belief that nothing unusual had happened.

He knocked with a loud clatter, feet sounded in the hall, and the door fell open. Jackson looked at him with no appearance of surprise.

"Good morning, Jackson," he said, kicking his feet against the step. He entered, and laid his umbrella in the stand. "Is your mistress up yet?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the servant, placidly; "she's in the morning-room, sir, I think."

There was no emotion in the man's voice: his face wore no aspect of suspicion or inquiry, and somehow Farrell felt already relieved. To-day was as yesterday, unmarked by any grave event.

"Ah!" he said, and passed down the hall. At the foot of the stairs he paused again, with a pretence of dusting something from his coat, and winced at the white gleam of his dress-shirt. Nothing stirred in the house save a maid brushing overhead, and for a while he lingered. He still shrank from encountering his wife, and there was his room for refuge until he had put on a quieter habit of mind. His clothes damned him so loudly that all the world must guess at a glance. And then again the man resumed his manliness; he would not browbeat himself for the mere knowledge of his own shame; and, passing rapidly along the hall, he pushed open the door of the morning-room.

A woman rose on his entrance, with a happy little cry.

"George!" she said, "Dear George, I'm so glad."

She

She put up her arms and lifted her face to him. Farrell shivered; the invitation repelled him; in the moment of that innocent welcome the horror of his sin rose foul before him. He touched her lightly on the cheek and withdrew a little distance.

"I'm not a nice object, Letty," he faltered; "see what a mess the beastly mud has made of me. And look at my fine dress-clothes." He laughed with constraint. "You'd think I lived in them."

"Oh, dearest, I was so disappointed," said the girl; "I sat up ever so late for you. But I was so tired. I'm always tired now. And at last I yawned myself to sleep. Where ever have you been?"

The colour flickered in Farrell's face, and his fingers trembled on the table.

"Oh, I couldn't get away from Fowler's, you know. Went there after the club, and lost my train like a fool."

His uneasy eyes rose furtively to her face. He was invested with morbid suspicions, suspicions of her suspicion; but the girl's gaze rested frankly upon him, and she smiled pleasantly.

"That dreadful club! You shan't go there again for a week, darling. I'm so glad you've come. I was nearly being very frightened about you. I've been so lonely." She took him by the arm. "Poor dear, and you had to come all through London with those things on. Didn't people stare?"

"I will change them," he said abruptly, and turned to leave.

"What!" she said archly, "Would you go without—and I haven't seen you for so long." She threw her arms about his neck.

"For God's sake—No, no, Letty, don't touch me," he broke out harshly.

The girl's lips parted, and a look of pain started into her face.

"I mean," he explained quickly, "I am so very dirty, dear. You'd soil your pretty frock."

"Silly!"

"Silly!" she returned smiling, "and it isn't a pretty frock. I can't wear pretty frocks any longer," she added mournfully.

He dropped his eyes before the flush that sprang into her cheeks, and left the room hurriedly.

His shame followed him about all day, dogging him like a shadow. It lurked in corners and leaped out upon him. Sometimes it crept away and hovered in the remoter distance; he had almost forgotten its attendance; and then in the thick of his laughing conversation it fell upon him black once more. It skulked ever within call, dwindled at times, grey and insignificant. When he stopped to exchange a sentence in the street, it slid away; he moved on solitary, and it ran out before him, dark and portentous. Remorse bit deep into him, remorse and a certain fear of discovery. The hours with his wife were filled with uneasy thoughts, and he would fain have variegated the cheerless monotony of his conscience by adding a guest to his dinner-table. But from this course he was deterred by delicacy; for, at his suggestion, Letty looked at him, winced a little, smiled ever so faintly, and, with an ineffable expression of tender embarrassment, drew her dressing-gown closer round her body. He could not press the indignity upon her young and sensitive mind.

But the fall of night, which he had so dreaded, brought him a change of mood. The table was stocked with the fine fruits of a rare intelligence; the plate shone with the white linen; and all the comforts waited upon his appetite. It was no gross content that overtook him, but the satisfaction of a body gently appeased. His sin had faded wonderfully into the distance, had grown colder, and no longer burned intolerably upon his conscience. He found himself at times regarding it with reluctant equanimity. He stared at it with the eyes of a judicial stranger. Men

Men were so wide apart from women; they were ruled by another code of morals. If this were a pity, it fell at least of their nature and their history. Was not this the prime lesson science had taught the world? But still the shame flickered up before him; he could watch its appearances more calmly, could reason and debate of it, but it was still impertinently persistent. And yet he was more certain of himself. To-morrow the discomfort would return, no doubt, but with enfeebled spirit; he would suffer a very proper remorse for some time—perhaps a week—and then the affair would dismiss itself, and his memory would own the dirty blot no longer. As the meal went forward his temper rose. He smiled upon his wife with less diffidence; he conversed with less effort. But strangely, as he mended, and the first horror of his guilt receded, he had a leaning to confession. Before, he had felt that pardon was impossible, but now that he was come within range of forgiving himself, he began to desire forgiveness from Letty also. The inclination was vague and formless, yet it moved him towards the subject in an aimless way. He found himself wondering, with a throb in his blood, how she would receive his admissions, and awoke with the tail of her last sentence in his ears.

"I'm so glad the servants have gone. I much prefer being alone with you, George."

"Yes," he murmured absently, "they're a nuisance, aren't they?"

She pushed the claret to him, and he filled his glass abstractedly. Should he tell her now, he was thinking, and let penitence and pardon crown a terrible day? At her next words he looked up, wondering.

"Had Mr. Fowler any news of Edward?" she asked idly.

The direction of her thoughts was his; he played with the thought

thought of confession; his mind itched to be freed of its burden.

"Oh no, we were too busy," he laughed uneasily. "The fact is, you see, Letty dear—I have a confession to make——"

She regarded him inquiringly, even anxiously. He had taken the leap without his own knowledge; the words refused to frame upon his tongue. Of a sudden the impulse fled, screaming for its life, and he was brought up, breathless and scared, upon the brink of a giddy precipice.

"What confession, darling?" she asked in a voice which showed some fear.

The current of his ideas stopped in full flow; where a hundred explanations should have rushed about his brain, he could find not one poor lie for use.

"What do you mean, dearest?" said his wife, her face straightened with anxiety.

Farrell paled and flushed warm. "Oh nothing, my darling child," he said with a hurried laugh; "we played baccarat."

"George!" she cried reproachfully. "How could you, when you had promised?"

"I don't know," he stumbled on feverishly. "I was weak, I suppose, and they wanted it, and—God knows I've never done it before, since I promised, Letty," he broke off sharply.

The girl said nothing at the moment, but sat staring at the table-cloth, and then reached out a hand and touched his tremulous fingers.

"There, there, dear boy," she murmured soothingly, "I won't be cross; only please, please, don't break your word again."

"No, I won't, I won't," muttered the man.

"I daresay it was hard, but it cost you your train, George, and you were punished by losing my society for one whole night. So there

there—it's all right." She pressed the hand softly, her face glowing under the candle-light with some soft emotion.

Farrell withdrew his arm gently.

"Have some more wine, dear," said his wife.

She raised the bottle, and was replenishing his glass when he pushed it roughly aside.

"No more," he said shortly, "no more."

The wound broke open in his conscience, red and raw. The peace which had gathered upon him lifted; he was shaken into fears and tremors, and that devilish memory, which had retired so far, came back upon him, urgent and instant, proclaiming him a coward and a scoundrel. He sat silent and disturbed, with his eyes upon the crumbs, among which his fingers were playing restlessly. Letty rose, and passed to the window.

"How dark it has fallen!" she said, peeping through the blinds, "and the rain is pelting so hard. I'm glad I'm not out. How cold it is! Do stir the fire, dearest."

Farrell rose, and went to the chimneypiece. He struck the poker through the crust of coal, and the flames leapt forth and roared about the pieces. The heat burned in his face. There came upon him unbidden the recollection of those days, a year ago, when he and Letty had nestled side by side, watching for fortunes in the masses of that golden core. She had seen palaces and stately domes; her richer imagination culled histories from the glowing embers; while he, searching and searching in vain, had been content to receive her fancies and sit by simply with his arm about her. The thought touched him to a smile as he mused in the flood of the warmth.

Letty still stood peering out upon the street, and her voice came to him, muffled, from behind the curtain.

"Oh, those poor creatures! How cold and how wet they must be!

be! Look, George, dear. Why don't they go indoors out of the rain?"

Farrell, the smile still upon his lips, turned his face towards her as he stooped.

"Who, child?"

"Why, those women," said his wife, pitifully, "why don't they go home? They keep coming backwards and forwards. I've seen the same faces pass several times. And they look so bleak and wretched, with those horrid tawdry dresses. No one ought to be out to-night."

The poker fell from Farrell's hand with a clatter upon the fender.

"Damn them!" he cried, in a fierce, harsh voice.

The girl pulled the curtain back, and looked at him.

"Darling," she said, plaintively, "what is it? Why do you say such horrible things?"

Farrell's face was coloured with passion; he stood staring angrily at her.

"George, George," she said, coming to him, "why are you so angry with me? Oughtn't I to be sorry for them? I can't help it; it seems so sad. I know they're not nice people. They're dreadful, dear, of course. I've always heard that," and she laid her face against his breast. "But it can't be good for them to be out this wretched night, even if they are wicked."

She pressed against him as for sympathy, but Farrell made no response. A fearful tension held his arms and body in a kind of paralysis; but presently he patted her head softly, and put her gently from him.

"I'm in a very bad temper to-night, dear," he said, slowly. "I suppose I ought to go to bed and hide myself till I'm better."

She clung to him still. "Don't put me away, George. I don't mind

mind if you are in a bad temper. I love you, dearest. Kiss me, dear, kiss me; I get so frightened now."

A spasm contracted his features; he bent over and kissed her; then he turned away.

"I will go and read," he said; "I shall be better then."

She ran after him. "Let me come too, George. I will sit still and won't disturb you. You can't think how I hate being alone now. I can't understand it. Do let me come, for you know I must go to bed early, I was up so late last night."

The pleading words struck him like a blow. "Come, then," he answered, taking her hand.

"And you may swear if you want to very much," she whispered, laughing, as they passed through the door.

The sun rose bright and clear; the sky, purged of its vapours, shone as fine as on a midsummer day. With this complaisance of the weather Farrell's blacker mood had passed. His weak nature, sensitive as it was to the touch of circumstances, recovered easily from their influences. Sleep had renewed the elastic qualities of his mind, and the smiling heaven set him in great spirits. Letty, too, seemed better, and ate and talked with a more natural gaiety. The nightmare of the previous evening was singularly dim and characterless. He tried to recall the terror of it, and wondered why it had so affected him, with every circumstance of happiness around—his smiling wife, a comfortable house, and the pleasant distractions of fortune. The gulf that opened between Letty and himself was there by the will of nature. He had but flung aside the conventions that concealed it. It was a horrid gap, but he had not contrived it. The sexes kept different laws, and he himself, in all likelihood, came nearer to what she would require of him than any other man. He assured himself with conviction that he would forget altogether in a few days.

The

The day was pleasantly filled, but not too full for the elaboration of these arguments. They soothed him; he grew philosophic; he discussed the conditions of love with himself; he even broached the problem in an abstract way over his coffee at the club. For the first time he thought that he had clearly determined the nature of his affection for Letty. It was integral and single, it was built upon a pack of sentiments, it was very tender, and it would wear extremely well; but it was not that first high passion which he had once supposed. The unfamiliarity of that earlier exaltation had deceived him into a false definition of Love. There was none such in circulation among human bodies. There were degrees upon degrees of affection, and Letty and he stood very high in rank; but to conceive of their love as something emanating from a superior sphere outside relation to the world and other human beings was the absurd and delightful flight of heedless passion.

He had laid his ghost, and came home to his dinner in an excellent humour. The girl looked forlorn and weary, but brightened a good deal on his return. With her for audience he chattered in quite a sparkling temper. Letty said little, but regarded him often with great shy eyes. He looked up sometimes to find them upon him with a wistful, even a pleading, gaze. She watched every movement he took jealously. But she was obviously content, and even gay in a sad little fashion. He did not understand, but his spirits were too newly blythe to dwell upon a puzzle. He noticed with scarce a wonder little starts of pettishness which he had never seen before. They flashed and were gone, and the large eyes still followed him with tenderness. She rested her arm across the table in the middle of a story he was telling, and rearranged his silver.

"You must not cross your knives," she said playfully. "That's a bad omen." He laughed and continued his narrative.

Left

Left to himself, Farrell lit a cigarette and filled his glass with wine. The current of his spirits had passed, but he felt extremely comfortable, and very shortly his mind stole after his wife, who was playing softly in the further room. He could see the yellow fabric of the distant curtains gleaming softly in the lamp-light. He had a desire for a certain air, but could not bring himself to interrupt. An atmosphere of content enwrapped him, and he leaned back lazily in his chair. Reflections came to him easily. Surely there was no greater comfort than this serene domestic happiness, with its pleasant round of change. He had set Letty's love and his in a place too low for justice. It held a sweeter fragrance, it was touched with higher light, than the commoner affections of common people. A genial warmth flooded his soul, and his heart nestled into the comfort of desire. He was hot with wine, and his whole being thrilled with the content of his own reflections. He asked no better than this quiet ecstacy, repeated through a suave untroubled life. The personal charm of that fine body, the intimate distinctions of its subtle grace, the flow of that soft voice, the sweet attention of that devoted human soul—these were his lot by fortune. They conducted him upon a future which was strangely attractive. He had loved her for some months more than a year, and earlier that day he had summoned his bridal thoughts down to a pedestrian level; but now, in this hour of sudden illumination, flushed with the kindly influence of his wine, his afternoon fancy seemed to him ungenerously clipt and tame. Letty stood for what was noble in his narrow life; she invited him upon a high ideal way. If he were framed of grosser clay, it was she who would refine the fabric. The thought struck him sharply. He had learned to dispose his error in its proper place, among the sins, and he was not going to assign penalties unduly; but the bare fact came home to him that he was

unworthy

unworthy of this woman's love, that no man deserved it. He had evilly entreated her, but he would rise to a new level in her company and with her aid. She should renew in him the faded qualities of innocence and pure-heartedness which as a child he had once possessed. He would ask her mercy, and use her help. Her pardon should purge him of his dishonour; she should take him to her heart, and perfect faith should rest between them.

The vision he had conceived drew his attention strongly; he seemed to himself, and in a measure was, ennobled by this aspiration. Out of the fulness of his penitence he now desired the confession he had feared but a little time before. And, as he reflected, the notes of the piano changed, and Letty shot into a gay *chansonnette*, trilling softly over the sharp little runs. The careless leisure of the air took off his thoughts with it. It would be a bad world in which they might not be happy. The story would hurt her, he was sure; indeed, he could conjure before him the start of pain in her eyes. But after the shock she would resume her trust, and forget, as he was forgetting. He was entirely certain of her love, and, that secure, nothing could divide them. Perhaps she were better left to herself till she recovered from the blow; he would go away for a day or two. It might even take her worse than he expected, and he would have dull faces and tearful reproaches for a week or more. If this fell out, it was his punishment, and he would bear it in humility.

As his thoughts ran he had not noticed that the music ceased, and Letty's voice broke on his reverie.

"Mayn't I sit with you, dear," she pleaded. "It's so solitary in the big room!"

"Why, of course, sweetheart," said Farrell gently; "come in, and close the door; we'll be snug for a little while in here."

Letty stood by his chair and stroked his head.

"You

"You never came to say good-night to me last night," she said reproachfully.

Farrell put up his hand and took hers.

"Dearest, you must forgive me. I—I was very tired, and had a headache."

"Ah, that was the penalty for staying up so late," she replied playfully.

Farrell smiled and patted her hand.

"But you will come to-night, won't you?" she urged.

"Dear heart, of course I will," he said, smiling indulgently. "I'll come and have a long talk with you."

His wife sighed, in part, as it seemed, with satisfaction, and leaned her chin upon his hair.

"Life is very curious, isn't it, George?" she said meditatively, her eyes gazing in abstraction at the wall. "There are so many things we don't know. I never dreamed——"

Farrell patted her hand again, affectionately, reassuringly.

"I couldn't have guessed," she went on, dreamily. "It is all so strange and painful, and yet not quite painful. I wonder if you understand, George."

"I think I do, dear," said he softly.

"Ah, but how can you quite? Girls are so ignorant. Do you think they ought to be told? I shouldn't have liked to be told, though. I should have been so afraid, but now somehow I'm not afraid—not quite."

A note of pain trembled through her voice; she drew a sharp breath and shivered.

"George, you don't think I shall die, do you, George? Oh, George, if I should die!"

She fell on her knees at his feet, looking into his face with searching eyes that pleaded for comfort. He drew her head

head towards him, a gulp in his throat, and caressed her hair.

"There, child, there!" he said soothingly, "you are frightening yourself. Of course not, silly one, of course not."

She crouched against his knees, and he stroked her hair tenderly. Pity pulled at his heart, and at the touch of her he was warmed with affection. He had no means of consolation save this smoothing motion of the palm, but he yearned for some deeper expression of his love and sympathy. In the silence his thoughts turned to their former occupation, and he felt nearer than ever to his wife. He would tell her when she had recovered.

She raised her head at length and looked at him.

"Oh, you will think I'm not brave," she said tremulously, "but I am brave—indeed, George. It is only sometimes that I get this fit of depression, and it overbears me. But it isn't me;—it is something quite foreign within me: I was never a coward, dear."

"No, darling," he answered, "of course you are not a coward. You're brave, very brave; you're my dear brave wife." She smiled at him faintly. "And you know, Letty," he went on, still with his hand upon her head. "I think we've been very happy together, and shall be very happy together, always. There is so much that binds us to one another. You love me, dear, don't you? and you could never doubt that I love you, could you?"

Letty shook her head. He cast down his eyes, patting the tresses softly.

"And I think you know that well enough and are certain enough of that not to misjudge me," he resumed quietly. "If I have made a mistake, Letty, it is not you who will be hardest on me, I am sure. It is I myself. If I have fallen into a seeming

seeming disloyalty, it is not I, as you will believe and understand, but something, as you said just now, quite foreign within me. For I could only be true and loyal and——"

He hesitated, raising his shameful eyes to her.

"What—what is it, George?" she asked anxiously, "what have you done?" His hand rose and fell mechanically upon her head. He parted his lips with an effort, and continued. The task was harder than he had thought.

"It is right," he said slowly, "that we should have no secrets from one another; it is necessary, dear, that we should bear all things in common. To be man and wife, and to love each other, calls for this openness between us." He stumbled on the threshold of his confession; the pain of this slow progression suddenly unnerved him; all at once he took it with a rush. "Darling," he cried quickly and on a sharper note, "I want to confess something to you, and I want your forgiveness. That night I was away I did not spend with Fowler. I spent it——"

"You spent it gambling?" she asked, in a low voice.

"No," he said with a groan, "I spent it in another house—I spent it—I spent it in shame."

He breathed the better for the words, even though a terrible silence reigned in the room. At least the worst part of his penalty was undergone, for the explanation was over.

But when she spoke he realised, with a sense of dread, that he had not passed the ordeal.

"I don't understand, George," she said in a voice thick with trouble. "What is it? Where did you stay?"

The strain was too great for his weak nerves. "For God's sake, Letty," he broke out, "try to understand me and forgive me. I dined too well; I was almost drunk. I left the club with Fowler very late. Oh, it's hideous to have to tell you. I met some

some one I had never seen since—Oh, long before I loved you. I could not pass her. I—O God! can't you understand? Don't make me explain so horribly."

The tale ran from him in short and broken sentences. His fingers twisted nervously about a wisp of her hair; his gaze had nowhere rest. She looked full into his face with frightened eyes.

"Do you mean—those women—we saw?" she asked at last, in a voice pitched so low that he hardly heard.

"Yes," he whispered; and then again there was silence. The agony of the suspense was intolerable. "You will never forgive me," he muttered.

He felt her trembling hands grow cold under his touch; and as she still kept silence, he dropped his slow, reluctant glance to meet hers. At the sight of the terrified eyes he put his hands towards her quickly.

"Letty, Letty," he cried, "for God's sake, don't look like that. Speak to me; say you forgive me. Dearest, darling, forgive me."

She rose as if unconscious of her action, and, walking slowly to the fireplace, stood looking at the red flames.

"Letty," he called, "don't spurn me like this. Darling, darling!"

His attitude, as he waited for her response, there in the centre of the room, was one of singular despair. His mouth was wried with an expression of suffering; he endured all the pangs of a sensitive nature which has been always wont to shelter itself from pain. But still she made no answer. And then she seemed suddenly taken with a great convulsion; her body trembled and shivered; she wheeled half-way round with a cry; her eyes shone with pain.

"George, George!" she screamed on a horrid note of agony, and

and swaying for a second to and fro, fell hard across the fender and against the live bars of the grate.

Farrell sprang across the intervening space and swung her head away from the angry flames. She lay limp and still upon the hearth-rug, a smear of black streaking her white arm from the elbow, the smell of her frizzled gown fusing with the odour of burned hair. Her face was set white, the mouth peaked with a spasm of pain; the eyelids had not fully fallen, and a dreadful glimmer of light flickered from a slit in the unconscious eyes. He stood, struck weak and silent for a moment, and then flung himself upon the floor, and hung over the body.

"Letty, Letty!" he cried. "Letty, Letty! Oh, my God! have I killed you?" The flesh twitched upon the drawn face, and a moan issued from her lips. Farrell leaped to the bell-rope and pulled fast; and away in some distant depth the peals jangled in alarm. A servant threw open the door and rushed into the room.

"A doctor, a doctor!" cried Farrell, vehemently. "Get a doctor at once. Your mistress is ill. Do you hear, Jackson? God, man, don't stare at me. Go, go!"

As the door closed Farrell's glance stole back to the floor. His breath came fast as he contemplated the body. It lay there as though flung by the hand of death, and wore a pitiful aspect. It forbade him; it seemed to lower at him; he could not associate it with life, still less with Letty. It owned some separate and horrible existence of itself. The flames mounting in the fire threw out great flashes upon the recumbent figure, and the pale flesh took on a moving colour. Hours seem to pass as he stood beside her, and not until the quivering eyelids denoted a return of life did he gain courage to touch her. With that she became somehow familiar again; she was no more the blank eidolon of a woman. He put his arms beneath her and slowly lifted

lifted the reviving body to the sofa. The blood renewed its course in the arteries, and she opened her eyes dully and closed them again.

The entrance of the doctor dispelled for a while the gloomy thoughts that environed him. The man was a stranger, but was welcomed as an intimate.

"She has had a shock," said Farrell. "You will understand. It was my doing," he added.

The sharp change from the dreadful reveries of his solitude turned Farrell to a different creature. He was animated with action; he bustled about on errands; he ran for brandy, and his legs bore him everywhere, hardly with his knowledge. And as the examination proceeded he grew strangely cheerful, watching the face of the physician and drawing inferences to his fancy. He laughed lightly at the doubt if she could be lifted to her room.

"Yes, of course," said he.

"The stairs are steep, sir," said Letty's maid.

He smiled, and drew back the cuffs from his strong wrists. Stooping, he picked up his wife lightly, and strode upstairs.

As the doctor was leaving, Farrell waylaid him in the hall and took him to the door. The visitor drew on his gloves and spoke of the weather; the sky threatened rain again and the night was growing black. Farrell agreed with him hurriedly, adding a few remarks of no interest, as though to preserve that air of unconcern which the doctor seemed to take for granted; and then, with his hand on the door, abruptly touched his subject.

"Is there any danger?" he asked.

The doctor paused and buttoned his glove.

"She is very sensitive," said the doctor.

"It was my doing," said Farrell after a moment, dropping his eyes to the floor.

"It

"It is a dangerous time," said the doctor. "Very little may do damage. We can't be too careful in these affairs."

He finished with his gloves and put out his hand.

"Have I," stammered Farrell, "have I done irreparable harm?"

"She is very delicate," said the doctor.

"What will it mean?" asked the husband, lowering his voice.

The doctor smiled and touched him with his fingers. "If you were to cut your finger, my friend, a doctor would never prophesy. Events are out of all proportions to causes." He put his own hand upon the latch. "I will call to-morrow early," he said, "and will send a nurse at once."

Farrell took his arm in a hard grip.

"Is she dying?" he asked hoarsely.

The doctor moved impatiently. "My dear sir, certainly not," he answered hastily. He threw open the door and emerged into the night. "I would not distress myself with unnecessary fancies, Mr. Farrell," said he, as he dropped down the steps.

Farrell walked down the hall to the foot of the stairs. He laid a hand upon the balustrade uncertainly. The house was engrossed in silence; then from the floor above came a sharp cry, as of a creature in pain, and a door shut softly. Trembling, he rushed into the dining-room, and hid his face in his hands. Yet that weak device was no refuge from his hideous thoughts. His brain was crowded with fears and terrors; in the solitude of that chamber he was haunted by frightful ghosts. The things stood upon the white cloth like spectres; the lamp burned low, and splashes of flame rose and fell in the ashes. He rose and poured some brandy into a glass. The muscles jumped in his hands, and the liquor spilled over the edges and stained his shirt, but the draught strung up his nerves, and brighter thoughts flowed in his mind.

mind. He pulled out a chair before the fire and sat down, meditating more quietly.

An hour later he was disturbed from his reflections by the passage of feet along the hall. His ears took in the sound with a fret of new anxiety; it portended fresh horrors to him. But in a little he realised from the voices without that the nurse had arrived, and a feeling of relief pervaded him. The footsteps passed upstairs. He sat passive within the arms of his chair and listened. A fresh hope of succour lay in those feet. The doctor and the nurse and the maid were doing what was vital; in their attentions was the promise of rescue. It was as if he himself took no part in the tragedy; he sat as a spectator in the stalls, and viewed the action only with the concern of an interested visitor. He filled another tumbler with spirit.

The alcohol fired his blood, and raised him superior to the petty worry of his nerves. He drank and stared in the embers and considered. Letty was ill in a manner not uncommon; even though it threatened the sacrifice of one life the malady was not inevitably mortal. He had been bidden to discharge his fears, and brandy had discharged them for him. He turned to fill his glass again; the fumes were in his head, but at that moment the recollection of his last excess flashed suddenly upon him, and, with an inarticulate scream of rage, he dashed the bottle to the floor, and ground the glass under his feet. Rising irresolutely he made his way upstairs, and paused before Letty's door. At his knock the nurse came out and greeted him—a strange tall woman with hard eyes.

"My wife," he asked—"is Mrs. Farrell better?"

She pushed him gently away. "I think so," she said; "we shall see. The worst is over, perhaps. You understand. Hush, she is sleeping now at last." He lingered still, and she made a gesture to

to dismiss him, her voice softening. "Dr. Green will tell you best to-morrow."

Farrell entered his room and took off his coat. His ears, grown delicate to the merest suspicion, seemed to catch a sound upon the stillness, and opening the door he looked out. All was quiet; the great lamp upon the landing swung noiselessly, shedding its dim beams upon the pannelled walls. He shut to the door, and once more was in the wilderness of his own thoughts.

The doctor came twice that next day. In the morning a white and anxious face met him on the stairs and scanned him eagerly.

"She is going on, going on," said he deliberately.

"Then the danger is passed?" cried Farrell, his heart beating with new vigour.

"No doctor can say that," said the doctor slowly. "She is as well as I expected to find her. It was very difficult."

"But will she——" began Farrell, stammering.

"Well?" exclaimed the doctor sharply.

"Will she live?"

The doctor's eye avoided his. "Those things are never certain," he said. "You must hope. I know more than you, and I hope."

"Yes, yes," cried Farrell impatiently. "But, my God, doctor," he burst forth, "will she die?"

The doctor glanced at him and then away. "It is possible," he said gravely.

Farrell leaned back against the handrail and mechanically watched him pass the length of the hall and let himself out. Some one touched his arm and he looked up.

"Come, sir, come," said the nurse. "You musn't give way. Nothing has happened. She is very weak, but I've seen weaker folk pull through."

He

He descended the stairs and entered the drawing-room. The room looked vacant; the inanimate furniture seemed to keep silence and stare at him; he felt every object in that place was privy to his horrible story. They regarded him sternly; he seemed to feel the hush in which they had talked together, ere he entered. He could not bear the condemnation of that silence, and sat down at the piano, softly fingering the notes. But the voices of those chords cried to him of Letty. It was her favourite instrument, the purchase of her own means, and every resonance reminded him of her. It was by her hand that melodies had been framed and fashioned from the strings; his was an alien touch. They wept for their mistress underneath his fingers; he struck at random, and melancholy cadences mourned at him. They knew his secret, too. With a horrid, miserable laugh he got up, and putting on his hat, went forth and down to his club.

The change did not distract his thoughts; the burden lay as heavy upon his mind, but at least the walk was an occupation. He came back with a bundle of letters which his indolent nature had allowed to accumulate with the porter, and, retiring to his smoking-room made a manful effort to re-engage his attention. With this work and the hour of lunch, the time passed until the doctor's second visit. He heard the arrival, and, putting down his pen, waited in a growing fever for the sound of feet descending on the stairs. The smoking-room lay back from the hall, but Farrell flung open his door and listened. The day was falling in and the shadows were deepening about him, but still the doctor made no sign. At length he left his chair and called Jackson. The doctor had gone. He must have left without noise, for Jackson had not heard him; it was a maid who had seen him go. The discovery threw Farrell into fresh agitation; his anger mingled with terror. He had wanted a report of the illness; he

he would have the doctor back at once; he had a thousand questions to put. Rushing up the stairs he rapped at the door of the sick room, softly and feverishly. When the nurse presented herself he burst out impetuously. He must come in; he would see his wife; he was persistently held in ignorance of her condition, and he demanded admittance as a right. The nurse stood aside and beckoned him forward without a word. Her face was set harder than ever; she looked worn and weary.

Farrell entered softly, and with furtive fears.

"You may stay if you will be still," said the nurse. Farrell looked at her inquiringly, beseechingly. "No," she added, "you will not disturb her. She has been put to sleep. She suffered a good deal. It is a bad case."

"Will she live?" whispered Farrell.

The nurse shook her head. "She will not suffer much more. She will sleep. But the doctor will come in the morning. We have done everything."

Farrell shuddered, and drew near the bed. The lamp burned low upon the dressing-table, and the chamber was in a soft twilight. He could not see her face, but her dark hair was scattered over the white pillows. A slow slight breathing filled the room. The window rattled with a passing noise. Farrell sat down upon a chair beyond the bed, and the nurse resumed her place by the fire, warming her hands. Outside, the traffic passed with low and distant rumbling.

* * * * *

At the sound the nurse stole stealthily to the door and opened it.

"It is your dinner," she whispered, turning to Farrell.

He shook his head. "I will stay here," said he in a monotone.

"You had better go," she urged. "You will want it. You can

can do nothing." He shook his head again impatiently. She yawned, closed the door and, with a little sigh of weariness, retraced her steps to the hearth. Farrell rose and followed her.

"Come," he said, bending over her, "you are very tired. Go and rest in the next room. There is nothing to be done. I will call you. Let me watch. I wish it." She looked at him in doubt. "Yes, yes," he pleaded. "Don't you see? I must be here, and you want sleep."

She glanced round the room, as if to assure herself that there was nothing to require her.

"Very well," she assented; "but call me soon." And she vanished through the doorway like a wraith.

Farrell took his seat and regarded his wife. The breathing came gently; masses of dark hair swarmed over the head that crouched low upon the pillow; one arm, crossing the face with shadow, lay reaching toward the brow. The room glowed with a luminous gloom rather than with light. The figure rested upon its side, and the soft rise of the hip stood out from the hollows of the coverlet. In the grate the ashes stirred and clinked; the street mumbled without; but within that chamber the stillness hung heavily. Farrell seemed to hear it deepen, and the quiet air spoke louder to him, as though charged with some secret and mysterious mission. He followed the hush with a mind half-vacant and wholly irrelevant. But presently the faintest rustle came with a roar upon his senses, and he sprang to his feet, stricken with sudden terror. The body moved slightly under its wrappings; the arm dropped slowly down the pillow into the darker hollows of the counterpane; the hair fell away; and the face, relapsing, softly edged into the twilight.

Farrell stood staring, mute and distracted, upon this piteous piece of poor humanity. Its contrast with the woman he had known

known and loved appalled him. His jaw fell open, his nails scored into his palms, his eyes bulged beneath his brows. The face rested, white and withered, among the frillings of her gown; unaccustomed lines picked out the cheeks; the mouth was drawn pitifully small and pinched with suffering. Even as he looked she seemed to his scared gaze to shrink and shrivel under pain. This was not the repose of sleep, releasing from the burden of sickness; surely he could see her face and body pricked over with starts and pangs under his eyes. It seemed to his morbid thoughts that he could read upon her moving features the horrible story of that slow disintegration; in his very sight the flesh appeared to take on the changing colours of decay. He withdrew aghast from the proximity; he blanched and was wrung with panic. In what place within that breathing human fabric was death starting upon his dreadful round? She respired gently, the heart beat softly, the tissues, yet instinct with life, were rebuilded piece by piece. Wherein lay the secret of that fading life?

The counterpane stirred faintly, and drew his attention. His wandering glance went down the length of that swathed body. The limbs still beat warm with blood, and yet to-morrow they must stretch out in stiff obedience to strange hands. The fancy was horrible—a cry burst from him and rang in the still and changeless chamber. The sound terrified him anew, breaking thus rudely upon the silence. He feared that she would awake, and he trembled at the prospect of her speechless eyes. And yet he had withal a passionate desire to resolve her from this deathly calm, and to see her once more regarding him with love. She hung still upon the verge of that great darkness, and one short call would bring her sharply back. He had but to bend to her ears and whisper loudly, and that hovering spirit would return. He stood, a coward, by the bed.

And

And now the lips in that shrunken face parted suddenly, the bosom quickened, and the throat rattled with noises. It flashed upon him that this at last was the article of death, and vainly he strove to call for help; his voice stifled in his mouth. She should not so dissolve at least; she should breathe freely; he would give her air—and, springing with an effort to the window, he flung it back. The cool air flowed in, and, turning quickly, he looked down upon the bed.

The eyes had fallen open, and were set upon him, full and wide. Unnerved already as he was, the change paralysed him, and he stood for a moment stark and motionless. The fire flared up and lit the face with colour; the eyes shone brightly, and he seemed to see into their deepest corners. There was that in them from which he recoiled at length slowly and with horror. They fastened upon him mutely, pleading with him for mercy. They were like the eyes of a creature hunted beyond a prospect of defence. Dumbly they dwelt on him, as though in his presence they had surrendered their last hope. They seemed to wait for him, submissive to their fate, yet luminous with that despair. He tried to speak, but the wheels of his being were without his present rule, and he might only stand and shudder and give back glance for glance. He looked away, but his fascinated gaze returned again to those reproaching eyes. They did not waver; it was as if they dared not lose their sight of a pitiless enemy. They recognised him as their butcher. Even through her sleep this poor weary soul had come to understand his proximity, and had woke up, in fright at his unseemly neighbourhood.

The lamp sputtered, a tongue of flame shot up the chimney, and the rank smell of smoke stole through the room. Farrell retreated to the table, and dressed the wick with trembling fingers. The act relieved the strain, but when he turned the eyes were watching

ing still. They bereaved him of his powers, and under the spell of their strange and horrible attraction he sweated in cold beads. They burned upon him from the distance, two great hollows of light, like shining stars, holding that awful look of wistful fear. There was no room in his mind for any sensation save the one; he could not think; he had no reckoning of the time his agony endured. But outside, at last, the bell of a clock-tower boomed far away and some hour was struck. And suddenly it seemed to him that the lustre of those great eyes grew dimmer; the look of sad expectation died slowly away. They stared with a kinder light. It was his fancy, perhaps, but at least it seemed that no strange creature now regarded him with unfamiliar terror, but his own dear Letty watched him again with soft affectionate eyes. His limbs grew laxer under him, and, with a little sob of relief, he stole forward, an uncertain smile of greeting growing round his mouth.

"Letty," he whispered, "my darling, are you better?"

He drew near the bed, and put out his arm eagerly and gently; but in an instant a start rose quickly in her face, the eyes kindled with a horrible look of panic, and with a faint repulsive gesture of the hands she shrank deeper into the wrappings. A little sigh followed; the limbs fell slowly back, and the eyes, with their dreadful terror, stared vacantly into Farrell's ghastly face.

The coverlet went on rustling as the bedclothes settled down.

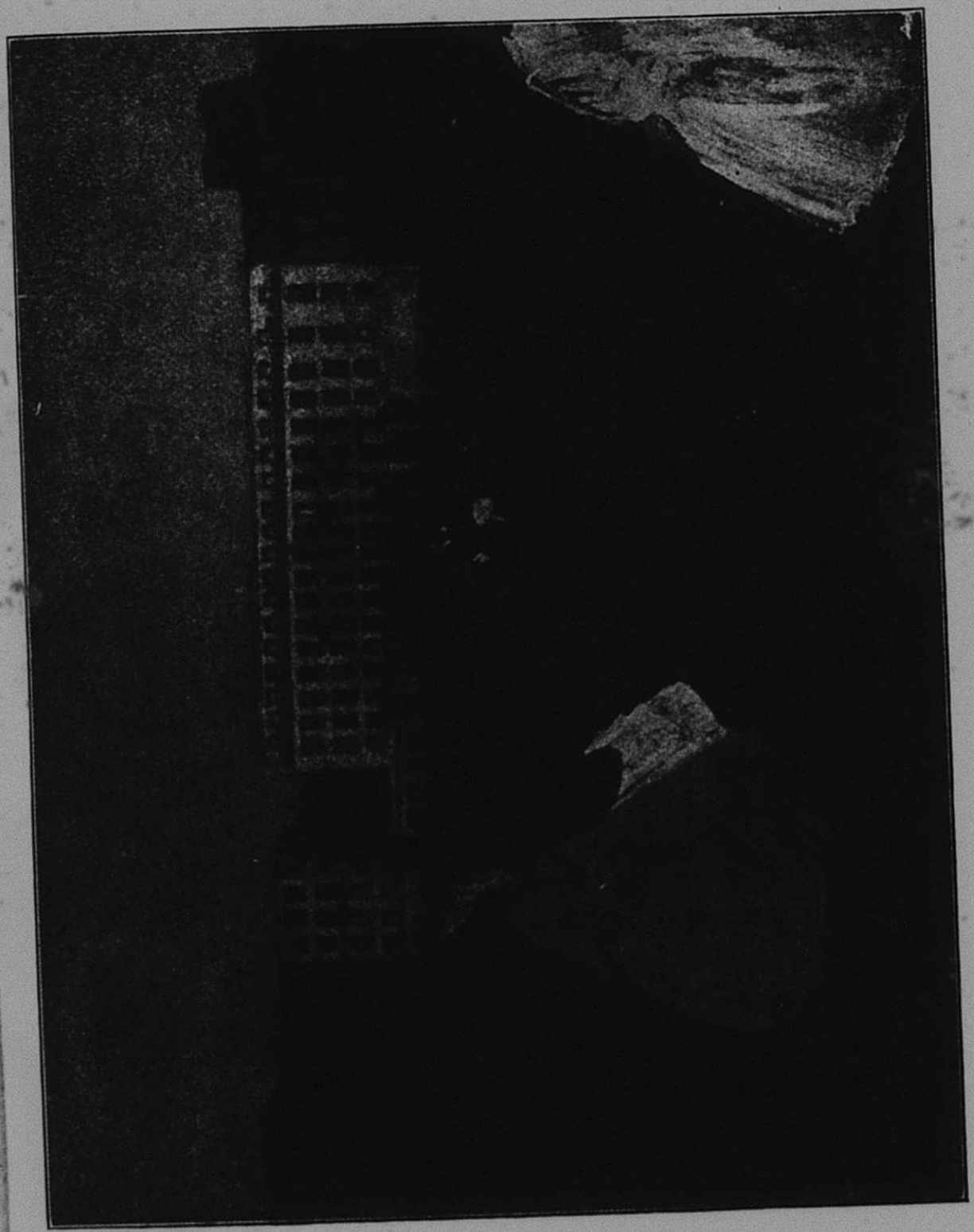
Three Pictures

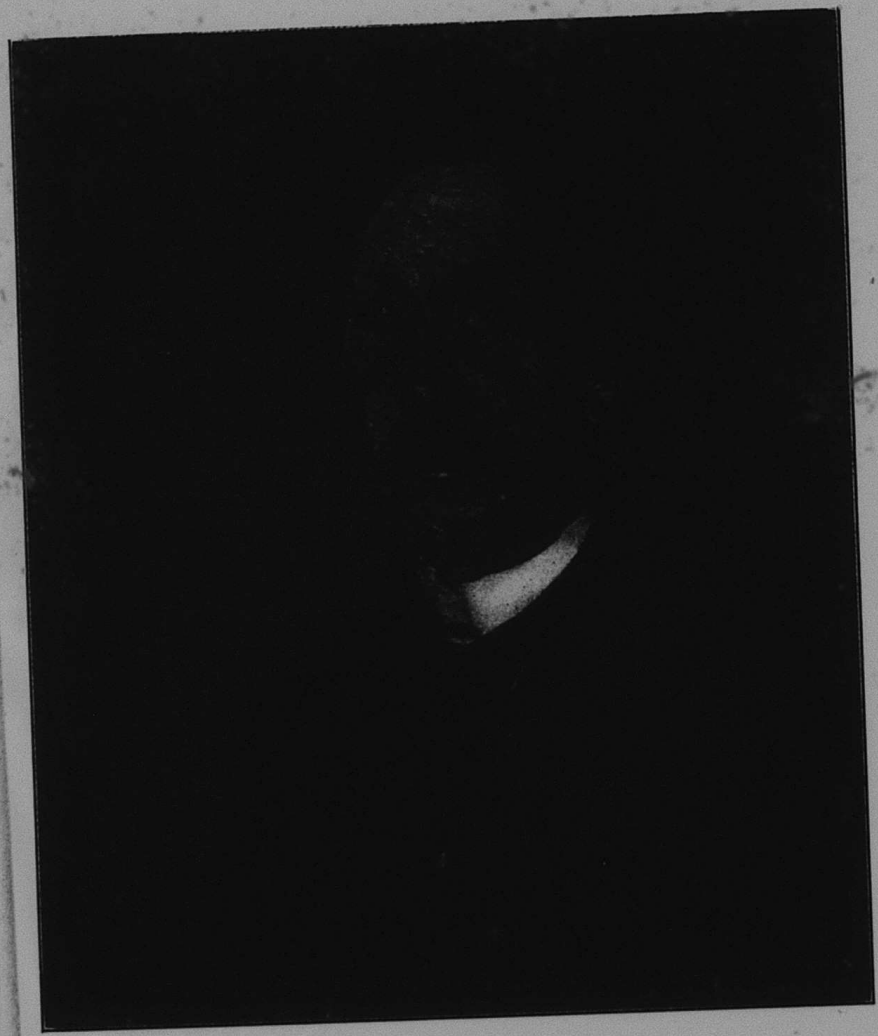
By Walter Sickert

I. Hôtel Royal, Dieppe

II. Bodley Heads. No. 1 : Mr. Richard Le Gallienne

III. Portrait of Mr. George Moore





Rondeaux d'Amour

By Dolf Wyllarde

I

BEFORE the night come, and the day expire,
The blossoms redden with the sun's desire—
Only the passion-flowers are colourless,
Burnt up and wasted with their own excess,
And tinted like the ashes of their fire.

Look down and see the reddest rose aspire
To touch your hand—he climbs the trellis-wire,
Burning to reach your indolent caress,
Before the night.

Ah, Love, be wise! for all too soon we tire,
When once the longed-for guerdon we acquire.
The wonder that we think not to possess,
Once in our keeping, holds us less and less.
Nay, let us love, nor all too much inquire,
Before the night.

During

II

During the night I felt you breathing deep
Against my heart—and yet I did not weep
With perfect passion !—fearing only this,
One golden moment of the night to miss—
The sacred night that was not made for sleep !

The stairs of life stretch upward, dim and steep,
Midway between a grief and joy I creep—
But let us just for once have tasted bliss,
During the night.

Strained to my breast I felt your pulses leap,
And this is the remembrance I shall keep
When all the serpents of oblivion hiss—
Of two who only clung too close to kiss.
We sowed in love—in passion do we reap,
During the night.

III

After the night Love wearied of his powers,
He fell asleep among the passion-flowers.
I felt the darkness solemnly withdrawn.
A dewy whiteness glimmered on the lawn,
Day weeping for this dear dead night of ours.

Vague

Vague, greyish lights, that first had threatened showers,
Deepened to golden, till the rosy hours
Trembled with tender passion to the dawn,
After the night.

Wan in the daylight looked our crystal towers,
Rising above the blossom-tinted bowers.
The world looked strangely on us in the morn.
Love shuddered in his sleep as one forsworn—
Poor Love ! who trembles at himself, and cowers,
After the night.

Wladislaw's Advent

By Ménie Muriel Dowie

I

When I first saw Wladislaw he was sitting on a high tabouret near a hot iron sheet that partially surrounded the tall coke stove; the arches of his feet were curved over the top bar, toes and heels both bent down, suggestive of a bird clasping its perch. This position brought the shiny knees of his old blue serge trousers close up to his chest—for he was bending far forward towards his easel—and the charcoal dust on the knee over which he occasionally sharpened his *fusain* was making a dull smear upon the grey flannel shirt which his half-opened waistcoat exposed.

He wore no coat: it was hanging on the edge of the iron screen, and his right shirt-sleeve, rolled up for freedom in his work, left a strong, rather smooth arm bare.

He always chose a corner near the stove; the coke fumes never gave him a headache, it seemed. It was supposed that he felt the cold of Paris severely; but this can hardly have been the case, considering the toughening winters of his youth away in Poland there. My observation led me to believe that the proximity was courted on account of the facilities it afforded for lighting his cigarette

cigarette. When he rolled a new one and had returned the flat, shabby, red leather case to a pocket, he would get up, open the stove door and pick up a piece of coke—one whose lower half was scarlet and its upper still black—between his finger and thumb, and, holding it calmly to the cigarette, suck in a light with a single inhalation, tossing the coke to its place and re-seating himself upon his tabouret, completely unaware of the amused pairs of eyes that watched quizzically to see his brow pucker if he burnt himself.

Wladislaw was his first name; naturally he had another by which he was generally known, but it is useless to record a second set of Polish syllables for the reader to struggle with, so I leave it alone. His first name is pronounced Vladislav as nearly as one may write it; and this is to be remembered, for I prefer to retain the correct spelling. He had been working quite a fortnight in the studio before the day when I strolled in and noticed him, and I do not think that up till then any one had the excitement of his acquaintance.

One or two sketch-books contained hasty and furtive pencil splashes which essayed the picturesqueness of his features; but he was notably shy, and if he observed any one to be regarding him with the unmistakable measuring eye of the sketcher, he would frown and dip behind the canvas on his easel with the silly sensitiveness of a dabchick. At the dingy *crèmerie* where he ate herrings *marinés*—chiefly with a knife—the curious glances of other *déjeuneurs* annoyed him extremely; which was absurd, of course, for as a rule no artist objects to being made the victim of a brother's brush. He would colour—I was going to write, like a girl, but why not like the boy that he was?—when the lively Louise, who changed the plates, or swept the knife and fork of such as did not know the habits of the place back on the crumby marble

marble table with a "V'lá M'sieu," sent a smile accurately darted into his long eyes. He didn't know how to respond to Louise, or any other glances of the same sort in those days; but if I am encouraged to tell further of him, I can give the history of his initiation, for I am bold to say none knows it better—unless it be Louise herself.

What puzzled me about his face, which was a beautiful one, of the pure and refined Hebrew type so rarely met with—the type that was a little commoner, let us hope, in the days when God singled out His People—what puzzled me about it was that it should seem so familiar to me, for, as I say, the type is seldom found. When I came upon Wladislaw, hurrying down the street to the studio with the swiftness of a polecat—no sort of joke intended—it would flash upon me that surely I knew the face, yet not as one feels when one has met some one in a train or sat near him in a tramcar.

The mystery of this was explained before ever I had analysed to myself exactly how the face affected me and where I could have seen it before. It was at the eleven o'clock rest one morning, when the strife of tongues was let loose and I was moving among the easels and stools, talking to the various students that I knew. One of them, her book open, her eyes gleaming and her pencil avid of sketches, was lending a vague ear to the model, who had once been in England, and was describing his experiences with a Royal Academician. They were standing near the stove, the model, careless of the rapid alteration which the grateful heat was effecting in his skin tones, steadily veering from the transparent purple which had gratified an ardent impressionist all the morning, to a dull, hot scarlet upon the fronts of his thighs. While she was talking to the model, my friend was sketching Wladislaw, who ranged remotely at the cold end of the room. The impressionist

sionist joined the group to remonstrate in ineffectual French with the model, and glanced into the sketch-book in passing.

"Just the church-window type, isn't he?" said this flippant person, alluding to the Pole; "and I have seen him behind the altar too, painted on the wall with a symmetrical arrangement of stars in the background, and his feet on a blue air-balloon."

The sketcher nodded, and swept in a curved line for the coat collar just as a controlling voice announced that the rest was up.

And I wondered how I had been so dull as never to think of it; for it was perfectly true, and, oh, so obvious now that I knew it! Wladislaw's beautiful head, with the young light-brown beard, the pure forehead, and the long sorrowful eyes, was an ideal presentment of the Nazarene; without the alteration of either feature or expression, he stood up a gloriously simple realisation of the Christ as all pictures have tried to show Him.

I was so amazed by this illumination, that I sat down beside the disconsolate impressionist, who "couldn't do a thing till that idiot cooled down," and was "losing half the morning—the Professor's morning, too," and talked it over.

"H'm, yes—he is. Hadn't you noticed it? I said it the very day he came in. I wonder if he sees it himself? Do you know, I think I could get rather a good thing of him from here? Yes, you wait; I've nothing to do till that beastly hectic colour fades off the model. I'm not going to bother about the background; I've painted that old green curtain till I'm tired. Get a tabouret and sit down while I design a really good window."

She sketched away rapidly, and I watched her as she worked.

"Funny," she remarked, as she blocked in the figure with admirable freedom; "I've never seen the Christ treated in profile, have you? It's rather new—you watch."

It is my regret that I did not disregard every rule and every courtesy

courtesy and snatch that sketch from her, half-finished though it was; but of a sudden the door opened and the Professor came in. The impressionist, with a sour look at the model's thighs and a despairing consciousness that she would have to hear that her colour was too cold, shut her book with a snap and resumed her brushes.

I had to manœuvre cautiously a retreat to the stairway—for idlers were publicly discouraged during the Professor's visits—and people who would leave off work at any minute when I dropped in to hear the news on ordinary mornings, looked up and frowned studiously over the creaking of my retreating boots.

It may have been about a week later that my acquaintance with Wladislaw commenced, and again the detailing of that circumstance is to serve another purpose one of these days; at any rate, we came across one another in a manner which is to a friendship what a glass frame is to a cucumber, and soon studio friends came to me for news of him, and my protection of him was an openly admitted fact. At first I had been somewhat burdened by a consciousness of his curious beauty; one is not often in the way of talking to a beautiful man of any kind, but I can imagine that classical beauty or historic beauty might be more easily supported. No particular deep would be touched by a meeting with Apollo or Antinous; neither awe, nor reverence, however discredited and worn-out its tradition, has ever attached to them. The counterpart of Montrose or the bonnie Earl o' Murray, much as one would like to meet either, would arouse only picturesque sentimental reflection; but to walk through the Jardin du Luxembourg on a sunny day eating *gaufres*, with—and I say it without the faintest intention of irreverence—with a figure of the Saviour of mankind beside you, is—is arresting. When the eye reposes unintentionally upon it in the silent moments

moments of conversation, it gives pause. Distinctly, it gives pause. I have never held it an excuse for anything in art or literature that one should turn upon a public about to scoff, to be offended, to be frightened, and announce that "it is true": that the incident in either a picture or a story should be "true" is not a sufficient excuse for the painting or the telling of it. But when I insist courteously to readers of certain religious convictions that I am not "making up" either my scenes, my characters, or what, for want of a better name, shall be called my story, I am only desirous that they shall absolve me from any desire to be irreverent and to shock their feelings. They might remember that what is reverent to them may not be so to me; but I do not hope to secure so great a concession by any means. What I would finally point out is that the irreverence goes back further than the mere writing down of the story; they must accuse a greater than I if they object to the facts of the case—they must state their quarrel to the controlling power which designed poor Wladislaw's physiognomy: to use some of the phrases beloved of the very class I am entreating, I would suggest that the boy did not "make himself"; he was "sent into the world" like that.

I daresay—considering what I am going to relate—I daresay he wished he had not been; he was so very shy a fellow, and it led to his being a great deal observed and commented upon. What encouraged me to feel at home with him in spite of his appearance was the real youngness of his nature. He was extraordinarily simple and—well, fluffy. For he really suggested a newly-hatched chicken to me; bits of the eggshell were still clinging to his yellow down, if I may hint at the metaphor.

His cleverness was tremendously in advance of his training and his executive powers. Some day, one could see, he was *going* to paint marvellously, if he would wait and survive his failures and forbear

forbear to cut his throat by the way. His mind was utterly and entirely on his work; I never heard him speak of much else; work and the difficulty of producing oneself, no matter with the help of what medium, was our everyday topic. And when desperate fits overtook us we bewailed the necessity of producing ourselves at all. Why was it in us? We didn't think anything good that we did; we didn't suppose we were ever going to compass anything decent, and work was a trouble, a fever of disappointment and stress, which we did not enjoy in the least. The pleasure of work, we assured one another again and again, was a pleasure we had never felt. By nature, inclination and habit we were incorrigibly idle; yet inside us was this spirit, this silly, useless, hammering beast that impelled us to the handling of pen and pencil, and made us sick and irritable and unhappy, and prevented us taking any pleasure in our dinner.

That was how we used to talk together when we were striding through the woods round Versailles or idling among storied tombs in the cemetery at Montmorency; and, dear me! what a lot of enjoyment we got out of it, and how good the sandwiches were when we rested for our luncheon! Sometimes Wladislaw talked of his mother, whom I apprehended to be a teak-grained Calvinistic lady with a certain resemblance to the hen who had reared a duckling by mistake. I wish now that I had heard more stories of that rigorous household of his youth, where the fires in winter were let out at four in the afternoon because his mother had the idea that one did not feel the cold so much in bed if inured to it by a sustained chill of some eight hours' duration. She was probably quite right: one only wonders why she did not pursue the principle further and light no fires in the day, because proportionately, of course—— But no matter. And, indeed, there are no proportions in the case. Once reach the superlative frozen,

frozen, and there is nothing left to feel. His third subject was the frivolity of Paris, of which we knew everything by hearsay and nothing by experience, so were able to discuss with a "wet sheet and a flowing sea," so to speak. He hated Paris, and he hated frivolity, even as he hated French. Our conversations, I ought to say, were carried on in German, which we spoke with almost a common measure of inaccuracy; and I think that he probably knew as little of the French language as he knew of the frivolity of Paris.

I tried to encourage him to take long walks and long tours on tramways—it should never be forgotten that you can go all over Paris for threepence—and when his work at the studio was sufficiently discouraging he would do so, sometimes coming with me, sometimes going alone. We explored Montmartre together both by day and gas light; we fared forth to the Abattoirs, to the Place de la Roquette, to the Boulevard Beaumarchais and the Boulevard Port Royal, the Temple and "les Halles."

But Wladislaw was alone the day he set out to inspect the Bois de Boulogne, the Parc Monceau, the Madeleine, and the *grands Boulevards*.

I remember seeing him start. If he had been coming with me he would have had on a tie and collar (borrowed from another student) and his other coat; he would, in fact, have done his best to look ordinary, to rob himself, in his youthful pride and ignorant vanity, of his picturesque appearance. I am sorry to say it, since he was an artist; but it is true—he would.

As it was, he sallied out in the grey woollen shirt, with its low collar, the half-buttoned waistcoat, the old, blue, sloppily-hanging coat, with one sleeve obstinately burst at the back, and the close astrakhan cap on one side of his smooth straight hazel hair. When I ran across him next day in the neighbourhood of

 the

the oleander tubs that surrounded with much decorative ability the doors of the Café Amadou, he agreed to come to my rooms and have a cup of coffee, in order to narrate the exciting and mysterious incident of the day before.

Sitting on each side of my stove, which was red-hot and threatening to crack at any minute, Wladislaw, with cautions to me "not to judge too soon: I should see if it had not been strange, this that had happened to him," told me this ridiculous story.

He had started up the Bois; he had found the Parc Monceau; he had come down a big street to the Madeleine; he had looked in; it had reminded him of a concert-hall, and was not at all impressive (*gar nicht imponirend*); he had walked along the left-hand side of the Boulevard des Capaucines. It was as poor a street as he could have imagined in a big town, the shops wretched; he supposed in London our shops were better? I assured him that in London the shops were much better; that it was a standing mystery to me, as to all the other English women I knew, where the pretty things for which Paris is celebrated were to be bought. And I implored him to tell me his adventure.

Ah! Well—now the point was reached; now I was to hear! One minute!—Well, he had come opposite the Café de la Paix, and he had paused an instant to contemplate the unrelieved commonplace ugliness of the average Frenchman as there to be observed—and then he had pursued his way.

It was getting dusk in the winter afternoon, and when he came through the Place de l'Opéra all the lights were lit, and he was delighted, as who must not be, by the effect of that particular bit of Paris? He was just crossing the Place to go down the left-hand side of the Avenue, when it occurred to him that he was being followed.

It

It here struck me that the beginning of Wladislaw's first adventure in Paris was highly unoriginal; but I waited with a tempered interest to hear how he had dealt with it. Here are his own words, but losing much of their quaintness by being rendered in an English which even I cannot make quite ungrammatical.

"I went on very quickly a little way, then I walked slowly, slowly—very slow, and turned suddenly sharp round. Yes, I was being followed: there he was, a man in a black frock coat, and——"

"A man?" I blurted out, having been somehow unprepared for this development.

"What else?" said Wladislaw. "Did you think it was going to be a cat?"

Well, more or less, I *had* fancied . . . . but I wouldn't interrupt him.

"Black coat and grey trousers, black bow tie and one of those hats, you know?" With his cigarette hand he made a rapid pantomime about his head that outlined sufficiently the flat-brimmed top hat of the artistic Frenchman, so often distinguished, but more usually a little ridiculous.

"I went on at an ordinary pace till I came to the Rue de Rivoli, then at that Café where the omnibus for St. Sulpice stops I waited"—Wladislaw's eyes were gleaming with an unwonted mischief, and he had quite lost his Judaic majesty—"to get a good look. There he was. A man not yet forty; dark, interesting, powerful face; a red ribbon in his button-hole."

"A red ribbon?" But then I remembered that every second Frenchman has a red ribbon.

"I thought, 'Shall I take him a nice walk this cold evening? Shall I go down and cross the river to Notre Dame, then home up the Boulevard St. Michel?' But no, it was late. I had had

nothing

nothing to eat; I wanted to get to the Bouillon Robert before dinner would be over. I ran into the Bureau and got a number; then I watched, and the first omnibus that had room I climbed up on the *impériale* and *watched him try for a seat inside!* Ah, I knew he was after me. I felt as if I had stolen something! Then the omnibus started. He had not got a seat. When it is already six you cannot get a seat inside, you know!"

I knew. "He came up with you?" I said.

"On the *impériale* also there was no room. I lost sight of him, but on the Pont du Carrousel I saw a *fiacre!*"

In spite of my earlier feeling I was a little interested; more so when Wladislaw told of his walking into a certain restaurant near the Gare Montparnasse—a restaurant where you dine with *hors d'œuvres* and desert at a scoured wood table for 80 centimes, sitting down beside several *ouvriers*—and seeing the stranger saunter in and take a seat at a corner table.

I feel quite incapable of rendering in English the cat-and-mouse description of the dinner which Wladislaw gave me; so I come to the time when he paid his *addition*, and turning up his coat collar, made his way out and up the Boulevard Montparnasse in the ill-lighted winter night, the stranger appearing inevitably in his wake at each gas-lamp, till the side street was reached in which Wladislaw lived on the fourth floor of a certain number thirteen. At his door Wladislaw, of course, paused, and looked the street up and down without seeing his pursuer.

"But no doubt," said my sly Pole, "he was hiding inside a courtyard door. And now, what do you make of that?"

I had to own that I made nothing of it; and we sat and speculated foolishly for fully half an hour, till we tired of the effort and returned to our equally vapid haverings about "work" and our common difficulties.

Four

Four days later—I had meantime confided the story to no one—four days later Wladislaw approached me mysteriously from behind as I was returning one morning from a visit to the Rue de la Gaieté, with a bunch of onions, half a loaf of black bread, and two turkey-thighs in a string-bag.

I knew from the set of his cap that something unusual had happened; and besides, it was the hour at which he should have been scraping at his *fusain* in the men's studio. He put a letter in my hand.

"You will say nóthing to anybody? I want you to translate it. I can't understand it all. But you will tell no one?"

I responded with an eager denial and the question as to who there could be for me to tell.

He seemed to overlook the half-hundred of students we both knew, as readily as I did; and we opened the letter.

This was it:

"Monsieur,—My name may perhaps be a sufficient assurance to you that my unusual conduct of the other evening in discovering for myself your residence and profession had no unworthy motive. The explanation is simple. I am painting a large canvas, to be called 'The Temptation.' I cannot proceed for want of a model for my Christ. When my eyes fell upon you, I realised instantly that yours was the only face in the world that could satisfy my aspiration. It was impossible for me not to follow you, at the risk of any and every misunderstanding. I beg you to receive my complete apologies. Will you sit to me? I appeal to you as a brother of the brush—permit me to leave behind me the most perfect Christ-face that has ever been conceived. Times and terms shall be as you will.

"Accept, Monsieur and colleague, the assurance of my most distinguished sentiments.

"Dufour."

I looked

I looked at it, laughing and gasping. I repeated some of the sounding phrases. So this artist—well I knew his name at the Mirlitons—this genius of the small red fleck had pursued Wladislaw for miles on foot and in fiacre, had submitted himself and his digestion to an 80-centime dinner of blatant horse-flesh, had tracked the student to his lodgings, got his style and title from Madame in the *rez-de-chaussée*, and finally written him this letter to ask—to implore, rather, that Wladislaw should be the model for his contemplated picture of the Redeemer! It was really interesting enough; but what struck me as curious was that Dufour of the tulle skirt and tarlatan celebrity—the portraitist of the *filles de joie*—should conceive it possible to add to his reputation by painting the Man of Sorrows.

II

It will have been gathered that Wladislaw was poor; just how poor, I think no one among us ever knew. He would sit all the evening long without a fire, and his habit of keeping a large piece of bread in a coat pocket and breaking bits off to nibble during the morning or afternoon's work very naturally gave rise to a legend that he lived upon bread alone.

I, for one, would sooner believe that to have been the case than have credited for a moment the story of the student who claimed to have noticed a heap of fish heads and tails in a corner of his room, the disagreeable residue of a small barrel of raw dried herring which he had kept by him.

I suppose that he paid his classes and boarding charges out of money sent at intervals from home, like any other student; but he final outward evidence of any shortness in cash was the colour of

of the packet in which he bought his tobacco. A careful observer might have accurately dated the arrival of his funds by noting the orange paper which enclosed his "Levant Supérieur." Then, as it behoved him to be careful, the canary yellow of the cheaper "Levant"; and finally the sign manual of approaching destitution in the common brown wrapper of his "Caporal." I am inclined to say that I noticed his leisurely but inevitable descent of these pecuniary steps every month.

Further, if moderately affluent, he would indulge in five sous' worth of roasted chestnuts whenever we went out together, and only on one occasion did it occur to me to provide him with a tram fare. Despite this poverty, I am very sure that when he arranged ultimately, at my instance, to sit to Monsieur Dufour for his picture of "Christ led up into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil," Wladislaw was very far from thinking of the remuneration.

The fact was, he had differed rather pointedly with a big Russian at the evening class, a man preternaturally irritable because eternally afflicted by the toothache; there had been words, the Russian had announced his intention of throwing the Pole from the top of the stairs, and being a taller, more muscular fellow, had picked him up and carried him to the door, when Wladislaw wriggled dexterously from his grasp, and jerked him down no fewer than eleven steps upon his spine. He described to me afterwards with less truth than artistic sympathy the neat bobbing sound as each individual vertebra knocked upon the wooden stairs.

This incident, and the fact that the Russian had taken an oath in public to pay his defeat a round dozen of times, served to cool Wladislaw's interest in the evening class. He told me also that the light tried his eyes; and he would come up in the morning with

with a fine vermilion point in their corners, the result, as I insisted, of his dipping locks of hair.

With a choice of reasons for his coming, I was yet surprised when he came, late one evening, and having whistled the opening bars of Chopin's "Dirge of Poland" below my seventh-floor window, decoyed me to the roadway, and described his first visit to the studio of Dufour in the Rue de Vaugirard.

Out of mere curiosity we had wandered to the number, one afternoon after the reception of the letter; and I well remembered the living stench of the *impasse*, the dead trails of an enterprising Virginia creeper, the broken mass of plaster casts which sufficiently located a young sculptor near at hand, and the cracked Moorish lamp which lay upon its side in the half-choked drain. All we had seen of the studio's furnishings was the silk-threaded back of a magnificent curtain which blocked an upper square of lights; but I knew that inside all must be on a much greater scale of artistic beauty than the queer, draughty barns of art-student friends, where I often juggled with a cup of tea—tea produced from a corner shrouded modestly in the green canvas covering of a French waggon and the dusty, bellying folds of a brown fishing-net. I was now to hear from Wladislaw what the interior was really like; how the great Dufour appeared when seen from the front instead of the rear, so to say, and upon what terms the negotiations were begun.

A certain indecisiveness in Wladislaw's painting was reflected in his conversation: he never could describe anything. Perhaps this is to do him an injustice; I would rather say that he had no idea of giving a detailed description. By whiles you might get a flash equivalent to one of his illuminative brush-strokes, which was very certain to be an unsurpassable appreciation of the fact or the circumstances; but bid him begin at the beginning and go coolly

coolly to the end, and you had him useless, flurried, monosyllabic and distraught.

I had early learned this; so I stood pretty patiently, although in thin slippers, on our half-made road, a red clay slough by reason of much carting, and listened to half-intelligible fragments of bad German, from which I gleaned quite a good deal that I wanted to know. First of all, it seemed the studio had another door; one we had never seen: you made your way round the back of the sculptor's white powdery habitation, and discovered yourself opposite a little annexe where the artist kept his untidier properties, and the glass and china which served for any little refreshment he might be disposed to take in working hours. The door here had been opened by an untidy, half-dressed French-woman, with her boots unbuttoned and a good deal of cigarette ash upon her high-braced bust; she appeared unaware of Wladislaw's arrival, for she came to the door to empty something, and he nearly received the contents of a small enamelled tin thing in his face.

A moment later, much shaken by the off-hand insolence of her remarks, he penetrated to the presence of Dufour himself, and was agreeably soothed by the painter's reception of him. Of Dufour's manner and remarks, or the appearance of his workshop, I could get no idea. He had a canvas, twelve feet by nine, upon an easel, and it seems he made a rapid *croquis* of his picture upon a smaller upright, and had a few masterly skirmishes with the *fusain* for the position of his Christ's head, begging the model to walk naturally up and down the studio, so as to expose unconsciously various attitudes of face.

During these saunterings Wladislaw should have come by some idea of his surroundings; but he was continually harassed and distracted by the movements of the woman in the unbuttoned boots, and seemed to have observed very little.

Upon

Upon a high point of an easel was hung a crown of thorns, and beside this leaned a reed; but Dufour explained that he had abandoned that more conventional incident in favour of the Temptation in the Wilderness, and explained at some length the treatment that he contemplated of the said Temptation. Nothing, of course, was to be as it had ever been before; the searching light of modern thought, of modern realism, was to be let in upon this old illustration, from which time had worn the sharpness long ago.

"They must feel it; it must come right down to them—to their lives; they must find it in their path as they walk—irrefutable, terrible—and the experience of any one of them!" Dufour had said. "And for that, contrast! You have here the simplicity of the figure; the man, white, assured, tense, unassailable. Then, here and there, around and above, the thousand soft presentments of temptation. And these, though imaginatively treated, are to be real—real. He was a man; they say He had a man's temptations; but where do we really hear of them? You will see them in my picture; all that has ever come to you or me is to be there. Etherealised, lofty, deified, but . . . our temptations."

"And you see what a subject? The advantages, the opportunities? The melting of the two methods? The *plein air* for the figure, and all that Art has ever known or imagined outside this world—everything a painter's brain has ever seen in dreams—for the surroundings. Is it to be great? Is it to be final? Ah, you shall see! And yours is the face of all the world for it. You are a re-incarnation. One moment so. I must have the head *trois quarts* with the chin raised."

Dufour talked himself to perspiration, so Wladislaw said, and even I at third hand was warmed and elated.

Surely

Surely it was a striking achievement. I don't think it occurred to me then to reflect how large a practice Dufour had had with the "temptations" realistically treated; certainly he had a name for the painting of them which no one could outdo; and if his new departure from the direction of gas and limelight to *plein air* went well there was everything to hope.

"And when are you to go again?" I asked, as I scraped the clay from my slippers on the wide door mat in our draughty *entresol*.

"Not for three days; he goes out of town, to Nancy. On Sunday night I go again, and am to pose in costume. He is to have me after, every night for a week, while he draws only, to choose his exact position; after that, I have to give up some daylight; but it won't matter, for I can join the evening class again for black and white. I have often thought of it, and meant to."

"And you don't think it is going to tire you horribly—standing and not saying anything?"

"Tire? Nothing could tire me. I could pose on one leg for him like a stork, for hours at a time, and never complain."

"I don't think it likely that a position of that kind——" I began; but he struck in:

"But not if that woman is about. She makes me nervous. You should see her hands: they are all white and swollen. When I ran a thorn in my thumb and it swelled, it went like that—all dead and cooked-looking."

"Don't!" I shouted. "Of course she won't be there. It isn't likely he would have a servant about when he worked."

"She isn't a servant; she called him 'Toni,' and she took hold——"

"She was a *model*," I said; and Wladislaw, who was so head-

long

long because so very young, heard the note of finality in my voice, and looking puzzled but complaisant, reserved further comment on the woman in the unbuttoned boots.

• • • • •

All that follows this, I am unable to tell in Wladislaw's own words; the facts were not given me at one, nor yet at two recitals—they were piled heterogeneously in my mind, just as he told them at odd moments in the months that followed; and that they have arranged themselves with some sort of order is to be accounted for first of all by their dramatic nature, and secondly by the inherent habit of my memory, which often straightens and adjusts, although unbidden, all that is thrown into it, so that I may take things out neatly as I would have them: thus one may pick articles, ordered in one's absence, from the top left-hand drawer in a dressing table.

At half-past eight upon the Sunday it was a very black night indeed in the Rue de Vaugirard. Wladislaw had well-nigh fallen prone over the broken Moorish lamp, now frozen firmly in the gutter which was the centre of the *impasse;* he had made his way round by the sculptor's studio, found the door unlocked, and being of a simple, unquestioning temperament, had strolled into the untidy, remote little annexe which communicated by a boarded passage with the handsome *atelier*.

A small tin lamp of the kind a concierge usually carries, glassless, flaming at a cotton wick with *alcoöl à brûler*, was withstanding an intermittent buffeting by a wind which knew the best hole in the window to come in at. Wladislaw nearly lost half of his long light-brown moustache by lighting his cigarette at it in a draught.

It was cold, and he had to undress to his skin; the comfort of a cigarette

a cigarette was not to be denied. Also he was late for his appointment, and this annoyed him. He picked up the lamp when he had taken coat and cap off, and searched for the costume he was to wear.

A row of pegs upon the wall offered encouragement. With a certain awkwardness, which was the result of his shyness of touching unfamiliar garments, he knocked down two hats—women's hats: one a great scooped thing with red roses below the rim; the other like a dish, with green locusts, horribly life-like (and no wonder, since they were the real insects), crawling over it. He hastily replaced these, and took up a white thing on another nail, which might have been the scant robe he was to wear.

It was fine and soft to his hand; it exhaled an ineffable perfume of a sort of sweetness which belonged to no three-franc bottle, and had loose lace upon it and ribbons. He dropped this upon the ground, thinking shudderingly of the woman in the unbuttoned boots. At last he came upon the garment he was to wear; it seemed to him that he knew it at once when he touched it; it was of a thick, coarse, resistant woollen fabric, perhaps mohair, with a dull shine in the rather unwilling folds; there was very little stuff in it—just a narrow, poor garment, and of course, white; wool-white. Wladislaw wondered vaguely where Dufour could have come by this wonderfully archaic material, ascetic even to the touch. Then he sat down upon a small disused stove and took off his boots and socks. Still hanging upon the nail was a rope cord, frayed rather, and of hemp, hand twisted. That was the whole costume: the robe and the cord.

He was out of his shirt and ready to put on the Hebrew dress, when he was arrested again by some half-thought in his mind, and stood looking at it as it lay thrown across a heap of dusty *toiles*. It seemed so supremely real a thing—just what The Man must

must have worn; he could imagine the old story more nearly than ever he had done before.

He could see Him, His robes of red or purple laid aside, clothed only in the white under-garment; the beautiful purity, the unimpeachable holiness of Him only the greater to see; young, perfect, without sin or soil; the veritable "Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil."

And he himself, Wladislaw, was the true image of that grand figure as He has come down through all the histories to the eyes of an indifferent world.

When he lifted his hand to his head, bewildered and held by it, the old blue trousers fell to the ground, and he stood there naked in the cold, taking his mind back along the familiar lines of the wonderful story, entering into the feelings of that Jew-Man who was persecuted; who, whether man or God, lived the noblest life, left the finest example—who walks to-day, as He did then, beside the few who may be called His disciples.

A blast that caught the little lamp full in its foul, yellow flame-tongue, left Wladislaw in the dark. He felt about for matches; perhaps no act could have so certainly restored him to this world, from which his thoughts had wandered. He found none anywhere. His straying hand came upon the garment; he caught it up and slipped it over his head, half horrified to feel that it came below his collar-bone in the neck, and left his arms with only half-a-dozen inches of sleeve.

Matches were lurking in his trousers pocket, and he had the sulphury splutter going in a moment and the lamp re-lit.

Turning to place it in a quieter corner, he faced a dusty square of looking-glass, unframed, such as painters usually have, its edges sunk into the dusty wall; he had quite a surprise to see himself.

More than half fascinated, he made a swift arrangement of his hair

hair, smoothed the soft flow of his moustache and beard, knotted the rope cord round his waist, and stood there only a second or two longer. Then, nerved by the startling simplicity, the convincing faithfulness of his whole appearance, he opened the door and went down the passage to the studio, frowning and stepping gingerly on the cold boards.

* * * * *

The curious murmur of sounds that struck his ear; voices, the music of glasses and silver, the slap, as it might have been a hand upon a cheek, and the vagrant notes of some untuned musical instrument—these all he barely noticed, or supposed they came from the sculptor's adjacent studio.

He opened the door and brushed aside the dark *portière* that screened out draughts; he stepped into the studio, into a hot, overcharged air, thick with the flat smell of poured wines and fruit rind, coloured with smoke, poisoned with scent, ringing harshly to voices—an air that of itself, and if he had seen nothing, would have nauseated him.

He saw dimly, confusedly; orange and yellow blobs of light seemed to be swinging behind grey-blue mists that rolled and eddied round the heads of people so wild, he did not know if he looked at a dream picture, a picture in a bad dream. If he made another step or two and stood, his arms straight at his sides, his head up, his long eyes glaring beneath drawn perplexed brows, he did not know it. There was a sudden pause, as though by a chemical process the air had been purged of sounds. Then a confused yell burst from among the smoke clouds, mixed with the harsh scrape of chairs shot back upon the floor; that, too, ceased, and out of the frozen horror of those halted people, some incoherent, hysteric whimpering broke out, and a few faint interrupted exclamations.

At a table heaped with the *débris* of a careless feast he saw Dufour

Dufour, his coat off, his waistcoat and shirt unbuttoned, his head rolled weakly back upon the gilded wood-scroll of his Louis Quinze chair: his face flushed and swollen, strangely broadened, coarsened and undone, with sick, loose expressions rolling over it as shallow water rolls above a stone; he had in his hands an old lute, a studio property, from which he had been picking poor detached, discordant notes.

There were other men, with wild arrested merriment in their faces, the merriment of licence. Mixed among them, tangling like the serpents and reptiles in an allegorical picture, were women of whom the drapery or the bareness seemed indifferently lewd.

One had fainted with a glass at her lips, and the splash of spilled liquor was on her neck and dripping from her chin. No one heeded her.

Another had dashed her head upon the table; her hands were clutched in her hair, shaking with a palsy of terror; and from her arose the sobs which were no more than the dull moaning of a beast in labour.

One other, in a dress all Paris would have recognised as being the orange ballet-muslins in which Dufour had painted his celebrated "Coquelicot," was lying with long white arms spread on the back of a chair; above her low black satin bodice the waves of her dead-white breast were heaving convulsively; her red hair blazed from under the live fantastic orange-poppy horns that spread out from her head; her clever, common little face was twitching to recover a vinous courage, the black eyes were blinking, the crooked lines of her mouth—more fascinating than any fancied bow-curve—were moving in irresponsible striving to open on one side, as they had a habit of doing, and let out some daring phrase.

All that they saw, these miserable revellers, was the white figure

figure of the Christ standing in the chastened light at the far end of the studio. There had been a slight rattling sound—a curtain had been drawn, and then the beautiful form had stepped out and stood before them—the very type of manhood Christ had chosen, if pictures may be trusted, when He came to this earth: the pure forehead, the patient sorrowful eyes, reproach in the expression of the eyebrows and the mouth, the young beard and brown soft hair—in a word, the Nazarene.

When Dufour raised a wavering arm, and with a smile of drunken intelligence exclaimed, "Ah, c'est mon Jésus-Christ! Bonsoir, monsieur!" a renewed shiver of apprehension went round among the madly frightened people. Then he rose, throwing off a cowering woman, staggering a little, holding to his chair, and turned to address to his guests a mock speech of introduction:

"Mesdames et Messieurs, je vous présente mon modèle, l'excellent Ladislas!"

When he had declaimed thus, rising superior to a thickened stammer, "La Coquelicotte," as the orange lady had at once been named, bounded from her chair with a scream. It was the signal for a lightning change of emotion: the hysterics rose to an abandoned shout of uncontrollable laughter; the moaning woman raised her head; the men banged the table and exclaimed according to their mood. One caught a handful of green stuff from a vase that had already been knocked over, and dashed them to the ground in front of the rock-still white figure. The dark-haired woman—Wladislaw had not recognised her, and she wore shoes this time—laid her swollen hand upon Dufour's shoulder and cried harshly, "Va, Toni! Monsieur a besoin d'un âne!"

More screams greeted this pleasantry, and "La Coquelicotte" flew

flew towards the figure with a *pas de cancan;* one arm tightened round his neck like a lasso.

Then his frozen quiet left him; there was a sort of fight between them.

An oath in his own tongue burst from him, but she twisted her fingers below his arms and dragged him towards the table, meeting every effort at resistance with a kiss. His head swam as he saw her face come close to him, its crooked mouth open, and the blank in her line of even teeth which was supposed to be a charm; her coarse hair seemed to singe his neck as it brushed upon him, and in a moment he was pushed into a chair at the table and received a handful of red rose-petals in his face from a woman opposite.

Dufour was murmuring some apologies about forgetting the appointment. He had been away; had come back in time for this supper, long arranged—a farewell to his old manner and his old loves; but Wladislaw barely listened. When "La Coquelicotte," sat upon his knee, he threatened to strike her, and then bethought him with shame that she was a woman.

He took a glass that was pushed to him, and drank to steady himself. It was Chartreuse they had given him—Chartreuse, more deadly and more insidious than pure spirit—and in a very little while his head failed him, and he remembered nothing after. Perhaps it was as well. The wild laughter and indecent jokes surged up hotter than before; every one strove to forget the stun of that terrible moment, when, at the jarring scrape of the curtain-rings upon their rod, the white figure of the Christ had interrupted them; when it had seemed, indeed, that the last day had come, that judgment and retribution, harsher than all hell to those taken in their sinning, had fallen on them as they shrieked and howled like human swine amid the refuse of their feast.

That

That was a moment they never forgot. It carried no lesson, it gave no warning, it altered nothing, and was of no use; but it frightened them, and they were not strong enough to wipe out its cold memory.

There is perhaps a moral in Wladislaw's story; if so, I have had no thought to write it. Certainly the world has turned and made mock, like those men and women, at the Christ-figure; and as I write I find myself wondering about the great promise which is still the Hope of some.

When He comes, if He is to come, will it be upon some such scene that He will choose to enter?

Castle Campbell,
September, 1891.

The Waking of Spring

By Olive Custance

SPIRIT of Spring, thy coverlet of snow
Hath fallen from thee, with its fringe of frost,
And where the river late did overflow

Sway fragile white anemones, wind-tost,
And in the woods stand snowdrops, half asleep,
With drooping heads—sweet dreamers so long lost.

Spirit, arise! for crimson flushes creep
Into the cold grey east, where clouds assemble
To meet the sun: and earth hath ceased to weep.

Her tears tip every blade or grass, and tremble,
Caught in the cup of every flower. O Spring!
I see thee spread thy pinions, they resemble

Large delicate leaves, all silver-veined, that fling
Frail floating shadows on the forest sward;
And all the birds about thee build and sing!

Blithe

Blithe stranger from the gardens of our God,
We welcome thee, for one is at thy side
Whose voice is thrilling music, Love, thy Lord,

Whose tender glances stir thy soul, whose wide
Wings wave above thee, thou awakened bride!

Rustem Firing the First Shot

By Patten Wilson


PATON WILSON. '04

Mr. Stevenson's Forerunner

By James Ashcroft Noble

For a long time—I can hardly give a number to its years—I have been haunted by a spectre of duty. Of late the visitations of the haunter have recurred with increasing frequency and added persistence of appeal; and though, like Hamlet, I have long dallied with the ghostly behest, like him I am at last compelled to obedience. Ghosts, I believe, have a habit of putting themselves in evidence for the purpose of demanding justice, and my ghost makes no display of originality: in this respect he follows the time-honoured example of his tribe, and if peace of mind is to return to me the exorcism of compliance must needs be uttered.

Emerson in one of his gnomic couplets proclaims his conviction that

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> This heedful world hath never lost"—

a saying which, shorn of its imaginative wings and turned into a pedestrian colloquialism, reads something like this—"What deserves to live the world will not let die." It is a comforting belief, yet there are times when Tennyson's vision of the "fifty seeds," out of which Nature "often brings but one to bear," seems nearer to the common truth of things; and all the world's heedfulness

heedfulness will not exclude Oblivion with her poppies from some spot which should have been sacred to Fame with her amaranth and asphodel. Still there will always be those who will stretch out a hand to repel or evict the intruder—even as in Mr. Watts's noble allegory Love would bar the door against Death—and I would fain play my little part in one not inglorious eviction.

I want to write of a wholly-forgotten prose-man (forgotten, that is, by all save a solitary enthusiast here and there), but I must first speak of a half-forgotten singer. Only people who are on the shady side of middle-age can remember the intense enthusiasm excited by the first work of the young Glasgow poet, Alexander Smith. He had been discovered by that mighty hunter of new poets, the Rev. George Gilfillan; and in the columns of Mr. Gilfillan's journal *The Critic* had been published a number of verses which whetted the appetite of connoisseurs in the early fifties for the maiden volume of a bard who, it was broadly hinted, might be expected to cast Keats into shadow. The prediction was a daring one; but the fifties, like the nineties, were a hey-day of new reputations; and when that brilliant though somewhat amorphous work, *A Life Drama*, saw the light, a good many people, not wholly indiscriminating, were more than half inclined to think that it had been fulfilled. The performance of the new poet, taken as a whole, might be emotionally crude and intellectually ineffective, but its affluence in the matter of striking imagery was amazing, and the critical literature of the day was peppered with quotations of Alexander Smith's "fine passages." Very few people open *A Life Drama* now, though much time is spent over books that are a great deal poorer; but if any reader, curious to know what kind of thing roused the admiration of connoisseurs in the years 1853–4, will spend an hour over the volume, he will come to the conclusion that it is a very remarkable specimen

specimen of what may be called the decorative style of poetic architecture.

"An opulent soul
Dropt in my path like a great cup of gold,
All rich and rough with stories of the gods."

"The sun is dying like a cloven king
In his own blood; the while the distant moon,
Like a pale prophetess that he has wronged,
Leans eager forward with most hungry eyes
Watching him bleed to death, and, as he faints,
She brightens and dilates; revenge complete
She walks in lonely triumph through the night."

"My drooping sails
Flap idly 'gainst the mast of my intent;
I rot upon the waters when my prow
Should grate the golden isles."

"The bridegroom sea
Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
And, in the fulness of his marriage joy,
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space to see how fair she looks,
Then, proud, runs up to kiss her."

These and such things as these were what the admiring critics loved to quote, and that they were indeed "fine passages" could not be denied even by people whose tastes were for something a little less gaudy. What was denied by those who were able to preserve some calmness of judgment amid the storm of enthusiasm was that this kind of fineness was the kind that goes to the making of great poetry. The special fine things were ingenious, striking and

and sometimes beautiful conceits; they were notable *tours de force* of poetic fancy; but they bore little if any witness to that illuminating revealing imagination of which great poetry is all compact. The young writer's images were happy discoveries of external and accidental resemblances; not revelations of inherent and interpretative affinity. Howsoever graceful and pretty in its way were the figure which likened the sea and the shore to a bridegroom and his bride, it gave no new insight into the daily mystery of the swelling and ebbing tide—no such hint of a fine correspondence between the things of sense and of spirit as is given in the really imaginative utterance of Whitman:

> "Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,
> As the water follows the moon silently with fluid steps anywhere around the globe."

What was most characteristic therefore in the verse of Alexander Smith was a winning or arresting quality of fancy; and, in poetry, fancy, though not to be despised, exercises a subordinate sway—"she is the second, not the first." It may be that Smith came to see this: it is more probable that he came to feel it, as a man feels many things which he does not formulate in a clearly outlined thought: at any rate, after the publication of *Edwin of Deira*, his third volume of verse, he ceased almost entirely from song, and chose as his favourite vehicle of expression a literary form in which his special gift counted for more, and carried greater weight of value, than it could ever count or carry in the poems by which he first caught the world's ear.

And yet, curiously enough, while Smith's reputation as a poet still lingers in a faint after-glow, the essays in which he expressed himself

himself with so much more of adequacy and charm cannot be said to have won fame at all. They have had from the first their little circle of ardent admirers, but it has never widened; its circumference has never touched, never even approximated to, the circumference of that larger circle which includes all lovers of letters. To be unacquainted with Lamb or Hunt, Hazlitt or De Quincey, would be recognised as a regrettable limitation of any man's knowledge of English literature: non-acquaintance with Alexander Smith as a writer of prose is felt to be one of those necessary ignorances that can hardly be lamented because they are rendered inevitable by the shortness of life and the multiplicity of contending appeals. The fact that Smith as a poet achieved little more than a *succès d'estime* may have prejudiced his reputation as an essayist; but whatever theory be constructed to account for it, recent literary history presents no more curious instance of utter refusal to really admirable work of deserved recognition and far-reaching fame.

For it must be noted and insisted upon that the essays of Alexander Smith are no mere caviare literature. They have neither the matter nor the manner of coterie performance—the kind of performance which appeals to an acquired sense, and gives to its admirer a certain pleasing consciousness of aloofness from the herd. He is in the true line of descent from the great predecessors just named; and as they were his lineal forerunners, so are Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Richard Le Gallienne his lineal descendants. Indeed the name of Mr. Stevenson suggests, or rather re-suggests, a thought which is more or less familiar to most of us—that in the world of letters there are seasons uncongenial to certain growths of fame which in another spring and autumn might have blossomed and borne much fruit. Only by some such consideration is it possible to account for the curious

curious fact that while *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Men and Books* found their audience at once, *Dreamthorp* and *Last Leaves* are still so largely unknown, and can now only be procured by diligent search of the catalogues of the second-hand booksellers. The fact is all the more curious because Alexander Smith may be roughly described as a Stevenson born out of due time. Roughly, of course, for the individuality of thinking and utterance which is so important in all pure literature is, in the essay, not only important but essential—the one thing needful, apart from which all other things are, comparatively speaking, of no account; and in both Smith's work and Mr. Stevenson's the note of personality always rings clear and true.

Their essays are what the essay in its purest form always tends to be—the prose analogue of the song of self-expression, with its explicit or implicit autobiography, that touches us as we are never touched by external splendours of epic or drama. In Montaigne, the father of the essay, the personal confession has an almost boyish incontinence of frankness: in Smith, as in all the modern men, it has more of reticence and reserve, but it is there all the time; and even when the thought seems most abstract and impersonal the manner of its utterance has not the coldness of disquisition, but the warmth of colloquy. We learn something of the secret of this quality of the work from a few sentences in which Smith discourses of his favourite craft and of his fellow-craftsmen. Just as two or three of our best sonneteers—Wordsworth and Rossetti to wit—have written admirable sonnets in celebration of the sonnet, so Alexander Smith is seldom seen to greater advantage than in the pages where he magnifies his office and makes himself the essayist of the essay.

"The essay, as a literary form, resembles the lyric, in so far as it is

is moulded by some central mood—whimsical, serious, or satirical. Give the mood, and the essay, from the first sentence to the last, grows around it as the cocoon grows around the silkworm. . . . . The essayist is a kind of poet in prose, and if harshly questioned as to his uses, he might be unable to render a better apology for his existence than a flower might. The essay should be pure literature, as the poem is pure literature. The essayist wears a lance, but he cares more for the sharpness of its point than for the pennon that flutters upon it, than for the banner of the captain under whom he serves. He plays with death as Hamlet played with Yorick's skull, and he reads the morals—strangely stern, often, for such fragrant lodging—which are folded up in the bosoms of roses. He has no pride, and is deficient in a sense of the congruity and fitness of things. He lifts a pebble from the ground, and put it aside more carefully than any gem; and on a nail in a cottage door he will hang the mantle of his thought, heavily brocaded with the gold of rhetoric."

It may be remarked in parenthesis that the above sentences were published in 1863, and they provide what is probably the first statement by an English writer with any repute of the famous doctrine "Art for art's sake" to which Smith seems to have worked his own way without the prompting of Gallican suggestion. Indeed, even in 1869, when Mr. Patrick Proctor Alexander edited Smith's posthumous volume, *Last Leaves*, he remarked in his introduction that he had thought of excluding the essay entitled "Literary Work," in which the same doctrine was more elaborately advocated, apparently on the ground that it was a new heresy which might expose Smith to the pains and penalties of literary excommunication. How curious it seems. In ten years the essay which Mr. Alexander printed with an apology became the accepted creed of all or nearly all the younger men of letters in England, and now it is no longer either a dangerous

dangerous luxury or an article of orthodox faith, but one of those uninteresting commonplaces which applied in one way is a truism, in another a fatuous absurdity. So does fortune turn her wheel for theories as well as for men and women.

In the passage just quoted Smith deals with the essay mainly as simple literature, but he loves and praises it not as literature only, but as autobiography; not merely as something that is in itself interesting and attractive, but as a window through which he can peer in upon something more interesting still—the master who built the house after his own design and made it an architectural projection of himself.

"You like to walk round peculiar or important men as you like to walk round a building, to view it from different points and in different lights. Of the essayist, when his mood is communicative, you obtain a full picture. You are made his contemporary and familiar friend. You enter into his humours and his seriousness. You are made heir of his whims, prejudices, and playfulness. You walk through the whole nature of him as you walk through the streets of Pompeii, looking into the interior of stately mansions, reading the satirical scribblings on the walls. And the essayist's habit of not only giving you his thoughts, but telling you how he came by them, is interesting, because it shows you by what alchemy the ruder world becomes transmuted into the finer. We like to know the lineage of ideas, just as we like to know the lineage of great earls and swift race-horses. We like to know that the discovery of the law of gravitation was born of the fall of an apple in an English garden on a summer afternoon. Essays written after this fashion are racy of the soil in which they grow, as you taste the lava in the vines grown on the slopes of Etna, they say. There is a healthy Gascon flavour in Montaigne's Essays; and Charles Lamb's are scented with the primroses of Covent Garden."

In

In the first of these passages Alexander Smith speaks of the mantle of the essayist's thought "heavily brocaded with the gold of rhetoric," and he himself was a cunning embroiderer. It was a gift of nature, but he did not learn at once how he could best utilise it. He brocaded his poetry, and on poetry brocade even of gold is an impertinence, just as is paint—*pace* Gibson—on the white marble of the sculptured group or figure. In the essay he found a form which relies less exclusively upon body of imagination and perfectness of pure outline—which is more susceptible to legitimate adornment by the ornamentation of a passing fancy. It is a form in which even the conceit is not unwelcome: to use the language of science the conceit finds in the essay its fit environment. Thus, in Smith's pages Napoleon dies at St. Helena "like an untended watch-fire"; Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn Law rhymer, is "Apollo, with iron dust upon his face, wandering among the Sheffield knife-grinders"; the solitary Dreamthorp doctor has a fancy for arguing with the good simple clergyman, but though "he cannot resist the temptation to hurl a fossil at Moses," "he wears his scepticism as a coquette wears her ribbons—to annoy if he cannot subdue—and when his purpose is served, he puts aside his scepticism—as the coquette puts her ribbons." When the black funeral creeps into Dreamthorp from some outlying hamlet, the people reverently doff their hats and stand aside, for, as Smith puts it, "Death does not walk about here often, but when he does, he receives as much respect as the squire himself." There is, in this last sentence, a touch of quiet Addisonian irony; and, indeed, Smith reminds us at times of almost all his great predecessors in the art of essay-writing—of his prime favourites Montaigne and Bacon ("our earliest essayists and our best" is his own eulogium); and also of Addison, Steele, Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt. But it is never a reminder

 that

that brings with it a suggestion of imitation. The methods and graces of these distinguished forerunners are to be found in Smith's pages only by patient analysis, and then never in their crude state, for his personality fuses them into a new amalgam and stamps them with a new hall-mark.

Perhaps the most purely individual qualities of Smith's work are given to it partly by his remarkable aptitude for the presentation of his thought in simile and metaphor; partly by his fine feeling for colour, and, indeed, for all the elements of picturesqueness; and partly by a native tendency to sombreness of reflection which makes such a theme as that of the essay, "On Death and the Fear of Dying," attractive rather than repellant, or—to speak, perhaps, with greater accuracy—repellant, yet irresistibly fascinating, as is the eye of the rattlesnake to its prey. The image-making endowment makes itself manifest in almost every passage that it would be possible to quote as characteristic; and it may be noted that the associative habit of mind betrays itself not merely in the sudden simile which transfixes a resemblance on the wing, but in the numerous pages in which Smith showed his love for tracing the links of the chain that connects the near and the far, the present and the past, the seen and the unseen. Thus he writes in his Dreamthorp cottage:

"That winter morning when Charles lost his head in front of the banqueting-hall of his own palace, the icicles hung from the eaves of the houses here, and the clown kicked the snowballs from his clouted shoon, and thought but of his supper when at three o'clock the red sun set in the purple mist. On that Sunday in June, while Waterloo was going on, the gossips, after morning service, stood on the country roads discussing agricultural prospects, without the slightest suspicion that the day passing over their heads would be a famous one in the calendar. . . . The last setting sun that Shakespeare saw reddened the windows

windows here, and struck warmly on the faces of the hinds coming home from the fields. The mighty storm that raged while Cromwell lay a-dying, made all the oak-woods groan round about here, and tore the thatch from the very roofs that I gaze upon. When I think of this I can almost, so to speak, lay my hand upon Shakespeare and upon Cromwell. These poor walls were contemporaries of both, and I find something affecting in the thought. The mere soil is, of course, full older than either, but *it* does not touch one in the same way. A wall is the creation of a human hand; the soil is not."

Smith's picturesqueness is fully in evidence here, though the passage was not quoted to illustrate it. Indeed, there are few writers who satisfy so largely the visual sense of the imagination. Even his literary appraisements—witness the essays on Dunbar and Chaucer, and that charming paper "A Shelf in my Bookcase"—have a pictorial quality, as if he must *see* something as well as *think* something. Here is Dreamthorp where the essayist, the transfigured Alexander Smith—"Smith's Smith" as the Autocrat of the Breakfast-table would put it—lives his ideal life:

"This place suits my whim, and I like it better year after year. As with everything else, since I began to love it I find it growing beautiful. Dreamthorp—a castle, a chapel, a lake, a straggling strip of grey houses, with a blue film of smoke over all—lies embosomed in emerald. Summer with its daisies runs up to every cottage door. From the little height where I am now sitting I see it beneath me. Nothing could be more peaceful. The wind and the birds fly over it. A passing sunbeam makes brilliant a white gable-end, and brings out the colours of the blossomed apple-tree beyond, and disappears. I see figures in the street, but hear them not. The hands on the church clock seem always pointing to one hour. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine. I make a frame of my fingers and look at my

my picture. On the walls of the next Academy's exhibition will hang nothing half so beautiful."

This is the *tout ensemble*, but every detail has its own pictorial charm. There is the canal—a prosaic unpicturesque thing is a canal; but this particular canal has "a great white water-lily asleep on its olive-coloured face," while to the picture-making eye "a barge trailing up through it in the sunset is a pretty sight; and the heavenly crimsons and purples sleep quite lovingly upon its glossy ripples. Nor does the evening star disdain it, for as I walk along I see it mirrored as clearly as in the waters of the Mediterranean itself."

The sombreness of reflection noted as one of the characteristic features of Smith's work as an essayist gives to that work a recognisable autumnal feeling. It is often difficult to think of it as the work of a young man full of the ordinary buoyant life of youth; though when the difficulty presents itself one may remember also that the young man was destined to die at thirty-seven—that fatal age for the children of imagination—and it is, perhaps, not too fanciful to indulge the thought that some presentiment of early doom may have given to Smith's meditative moods much of their pensive seriousness. However this may be, it is certain that Alexander Smith, with a constancy which the most careless reader cannot fail to note, recurred again and again, both when opportunity offered and when opportunity had to be made, to the theme of death, its mystery, its fear, and its fascination. In one of his poems, which I quote from memory, he speaks of his life as a highway which, at some unknown point, has his grave cut across; and even in the joyous "Spring Chanson" the poet, addressing the singing merle, drops suddenly from the major into the minor key, and ends upon the note by which the key is dominated:

"Men

"Men live and die, the song remains; and when
I list the passion of thy vernal breath
Methinks thou singest best to Love and Death—
To happy Lovers and to dying Men."

Autumn and death must needs be naturally allied in human thought, though to the joyous-minded even autumn will be associated with its present fruitage rather than with its presage of dissolution; but this intrusion of death into a celebration of the life and growth of spring seems irrelevant, almost morbid: it may even seem artificial, as if the poet were deliberately striving after a strong literary effect by the expedient of an unnatural juxtaposition of incongruous ideas. To a man of Smith's mind and temperament it has certainly neither irrelevance nor artificiality; whether we can rightly call it morbid depends upon the meaning we attach to a word to which the personal feeling rather than the common reason gives a definition. Smith's habit was to endeavour to realise death that he might more fully and richly realise life. "To denude death of its terrible associations," he writes, "were a vain attempt, the atmosphere is always cold around an iceberg"; and yet in imagination he loves to draw near the iceberg for some shivering moments that he may enjoy more exquisitely the warmth of summer sun or piled-up winter fire. To his constant thought

"There are considerations which rob death of its ghastliness, and help to reconcile us to it. The thoughtful happiness of a human being is complex, and in certain moved moments which, after they have gone, we can recognise to have been our happiest, some subtle thought of death has been curiously intermixed. And this subtle admixture it is that gives the happy moment its character—which makes the difference between the gladness of a child, resident in mere animal health and impulse, and too volatile to be remembered, and the serious joy of a

man

man who looks before and after, and takes in both this world and the next. Speaking broadly, it may be said that it is from some obscure recognition of the fact of death that life draws its final sweetness. . . . . This recognition does not always terrify. The spectre has the most cunning disguises, and often when near us, we are unaware of the fact of proximity. Unsuspected, this idea of death lurks in the sweetness of music; it has something to do with the pleasure with which we behold the vapour of morning; it comes between the passionate lips of lovers; it lives in the thrill of kisses. "An inch deeper, and you will find the emperor." Probe joy to its last fibre and you will find death."

To preserve always in the background of the mind some great thought or momentous interest, tends to ensure a certain fine justice in a man's estimate of the relative proportions of smaller things lying in the front of it, and Alexander Smith's essays have a restful quality of measure, balance, and sanity. In the "Essay on an Old Subject," published in *Last Leaves*, the young man who had but recently gone into the thirties writes with imaginative prescience—or possibly from a premature experience—of the joys and gains of middle-age (by which he means the forty-fifth year or thereabouts); and there is in most of his essays, especially in the *Dreamthorp* papers which came earliest, a middle-aged maturity which charms and satisfies, and never disturbs. But it is not a middle-age which has ossified into routine and become dead to youth's enthusiasms—witness the fine ardour of the concluding sentence of the essay in which he "memorises" Carlyle's appearance at Edinburgh to deliver his Rectorial address: "When I saw him for the first time stand up amongst us the other day, and heard him speak kindly, brotherly, affectionate words . . . . I am not ashamed to confess that I felt moved towards him as I do not think, in any possible combination of circumstances, I could have felt

felt moved towards any other living man." And yet, though he has not lost youths ardour, he has freed himself from youth's arrogant impatience; he can be moved by enthusiasms, but not driven helplessly before them; he can protect himself from himself and survey his own thought "in the round"; he has learned the lessons of Clough's pregnant words, "and yet—consider it again." At the same time his manner is never that tantalising, irritating manner of explicit guards, reserves, limitations—the manner of the writer who is always making himself safe by the sudden "but" or "nevertheless" or "notwithstanding." The due limitation is conveyed implicitly, in the primal statement of the thought—in the touch of irony or humorous extravagance which hints with sufficing clearness that this or that is not to be interpreted *au pied de la lettre*. The delightful essay "On Vagabonds," at the close of the *Dreamthorp* volume, might be described roughly as a glorification of the life of Bohemia, and an impeachment, or at any rate a depreciation of commonplace Philistine respectability. In dealing with such a theme with such a bent of mind, the temptation to force the note, to overcharge the colour, would be to most men—to all young men, impatient of restricting conventions—well-nigh irresistible; but Smith resists it with no apparent effort of resistance. There is no holding of himself in lest he should speak unadvisedly with his tongue; on the contrary, he lets himself go with perfect abandonment. The "genuine vagabond," he says, "takes captive the heart," and he declares it "high time that a moral game law were passed for the preservation of the wild and vagrant feelings of human nature"; but just when we expect the stroke of exaggeration there comes instead the light touch of saving humour, and we know that the essayist is in less danger even than we of losing his head, or, as the expressive cant phrase has it, "giving himself away."

Some

Some of the few (and if I could succeed in increasing their number I should be greatly content) who know Alexander Smith's prose well, and love it even as they know, have probably favourite papers or favourite groups. Some may feel especially drawn to the essays of pure reflection, such as "Death and the fear of Dying" and "The importance of a Man to himself"; others to that delightful group in which the familiar simplicities of nature supply texts for tranquil meditation—"Dreamthorp," "Christmas," and "Books and Gardens," in which last there is also some delightful character-portraiture in the vignettes of the village doctor and clergyman; others to the essays in literary appreciation, such as "Dunbar," "Geoffrey Chaucer," "Scottish Ballads," and "A Shelf in my Bookcase." In the words applied by Charles Lamb, with a certain free unscrupulousness to the whole world of books, I must say with regard to Alexander Smith's essays, "I have no preferences." To me they all have a charm which somewhat dulls the edge of discrimination, for the writer rather than the theme is the centre of interest; he is the hero of the play, and he is never off the stage. Still in some torture chamber of inquiry certain names might be extracted from me, and I think they would be "Dreamthorp," "Books and Gardens," and "A Lark's Flight." This last study, which has not been previously named, is one of the most noteworthy of Smith's essays, and will be grateful to the more lazy readers inasmuch as it tells a story. It is the story of a murder and an execution, the murder vulgar and commonplace enough—a crime of brutal violence, the execution a sombrely picturesque function, with one striking incident which seized and held the imagination of the boy who witnessed it; and the story is told with an arresting vividness to which I know only one parallel in English literature, the narrative appendix to De Quincey's famous essay, "On

"On Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts." The execution took place, after the old custom in Scotland, on the spot where the crime had been committed—a lonely stretch of grassland, some distance outside the city of Glasgow. The criminals were Irish navvies, members of a large gang employed in the neighbourhood, and as there were some rumours of a rescue, a detachment of cavalry, supplemented by field-pieces, surrounded the scaffold. Of the scene itself, and the one occurrence round which its latent pathos crystallised, Smith gives the recollections of boyhood. The men were being brought in a cart to the place of execution, and when they reached the turn of the road where they could first see the black cross-beam with its empty halters, the boy noted the eager, fascinated gaze the doomed men cast upon it. At last the place was reached, and Smith writes:

"Around it a wide space was kept clear by the military; the cannon were placed in position; out flashed the swords of the dragoons; beneath and around on every side was the crowd. Between two brass helmets I could see the scaffold clearly enough, and when in a little while the men, bareheaded and with their attendants, appeared upon it, the surging crowd became stiffened with fear and awe. And now it was that the incident, so simple, so natural, so much in the ordinary course of things, and yet so frightful in its tragic suggestions, took place. Be it remembered that the season was early May, that the day was fine, that the wheatfields were clothing themselves in the green of the young crop, and that around the scaffold, standing on a sunny mound, a wide space was kept clear. When the men appeared beneath the beam, each under his own proper halter, there was a dead silence,—every one was gazing too intently to whisper to his neighbour even. Just then, out of the grassy space at the foot of the scaffold, in the dead silence audible to all, a lark rose from the side of its nest, and went singing upward in its happy flight. O heaven! how did that

that song translate itself into dying ears? Did it bring, in one wild burning moment, father and mother, and poor Irish cabin, and prayers said at bedtime, and the smell of turf fires, and innocent sweethearting, and rising and setting suns? Did it—but the dragoon's horse has become restive, and his helmet bobs up and down and blots everything; and there is a sharp sound, and I feel the great crowd heave and swing, and hear it torn by a sharp shiver of pity, and the men whom I saw so near but a moment ago are at immeasurable distance, and have solved the great enigma,—and the lark has not yet finished his flight: you can see and hear him yonder in the fringe of a white May cloud. . . . . There is a stronger element of terror in this incident of the lark than in any story of a similar kind I can remember.

Gasps of admiration are amateurish, provincial, ineffective, but after reading such a passage as this, the words that come first—at any rate to me—are not in the least critical but simply exclamatory. It is wonderful writing! Then comes a calmer and more analytical moment in which one discovers something of the secret of the art in what has seemed at first not art at all but sheer nature. Mr. Pater, in one of his most instructive essays, has shown that the "classical" element in art is "the quality of order in beauty," and that "it is that addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character," romantic art at its best being moreover distinguished by a fine perfection of workmanship. This surely then is an impressive miniature example of romantic art with its combination of strangeness and beauty, and its flawless technique—its absolute saturation of the vehicle of expression with the very essence of the thing, the emotion that is to be expressed. Note the directness and simplicity of the early narrative sentences; they are a mere recital of facts, and their very baldness only mitigated by a single emotional phrase, "the surging

surging crowd became stiffened with fear and awe," prepares the mind for what is to follow. And then, the sudden break in the second sentence beginning "Did it,"—how perfectly natural it seems, and yet how dexterous it really is; how it renders perfectly and at a single stroke what the best-chosen words of narrative would have rendered jumblingly, the brevity of the interval between the lark's rising and the consummation of doom—the sharp bewildering suddenness of the end. Then, lastly, the curious in these things may notice a certain peculiarity in the construction of the concluding sentence of the story—the penultimate sentence of the quotation. There are in the volume barely nine lines, and in these lines the word "and" occurs eleven times. All frequent and close repetitions of a single word are generally avoided by good writers, and the repetition of an insignificant conjunction such as "and" is, as a rule, something to be specially avoided. Smith habitually avoided as carefully as any of us, but here he had to give the feeling of impetuosity, of eager hurry to get the ghastly story told, and the "and" which rapidly accumulates detail upon detail recurs as naturally and inevitably as in the voluble speech of a little child bursting into her mother's room with some marvellous recital of adventure encountered in her morning walk. This is the high literary art which instinctively and perfectly adapts the means of language—of word, sound, pause, and cadence—to the end of absolute expression.

Alexander Smith himself is never wearisome; and it would ill become me to weary those whom I would fain interest by surplusage of comment; but I should like to add a word or two concerning those essays in which he appears as a critic of literature. Mr. Oscar Wilde has said that all good criticism is simply autobiography—that is, I suppose, a statement of personal preferences. I accept the definition if I may enlarge it by saying that

that criticism is not merely a statement of personal preferences but of justifications for such preferences presented with a view to persuasion. Of course even with this rider the definition still leaves autobiography the main element in criticism, and of such autobiographical appraisement Smith was a master. Whether he formulated the rule never to write of any authors whose work he did not enjoy I cannot say: he certainly acted upon it with the most delightful results. So keen in his gusto, so adequate and appetising his expression of it, that one may dare to say the next best thing to reading Montaigne, Bacon, Chaucer, and the Scottish Ballads, is to read what Alexander Smith has to say about them. His talk about books is always so human that it will delight people whom one would not think of calling literary. He discourses on *The Canterbury Tales* not as a man weighing and measuring a book, but as a wayfarer sitting in the inn-yard of the Tabard at Southwark, watching the crowd of pilgrims with the eye of an acute and good-natured observer, taking notes of their appearance, and drawing from it shrewd inferences as to habit and character. He has certain favourite volumes upon which he expatiates in the essay entitled "A Shelf in my Bookcase"; and the principle of selection is obvious enough. They are books full of a rich humanity; beneath their paragraphs or stanzas he can feel the beating heart. The literary vesture is *simply* a vesture which half reveals and half conceals the objects of his love—the man or woman who lives and breathes behind. He reveals in the old Scotch ballads and German hymns, for in them the concealing veil is thin, and the thoughts and loves and pains of simple souls in dead centuries are laid open and bare. He prefers Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales* to his longer and more elaborate works, such as *Transformation* and *The Scarlet Letter*, because he finds more of the man in them, the solitary author who had no public to think of,

of, and who wrote because he must. He has a genuine catholicity, but it is not that uninteresting catholicity which lacks defined circumferences; and his general sensibility to excellence is emphasised by frank confession of his limitations. The author of *Paradise Lost* evidently lies a little outside the reach of Alexander Smith's tentacles of sympathy.

"Reading Milton is like dining off gold plate in a company of kings; very splendid, very ceremonious, and not a little appalling. Him I read but seldom, and only on high days and festivals of the spirit. Him I never lay down without feeling my appreciation increased for lesser men—never without the same kind of comfort that one returning from the presence feels when he doffs respectful attitude and dress of ceremony, and subsides into old coat, familiar arm-chair, and slippers. After long-continued organ-music the jangle of the Jew's harp is felt as an exquisite relief."

There is a trace of Philistinism here—the Philistinism which is not ashamed but rather complacent; and it may seem a strange whim on the part of one who loves Smith's work to choose as a final sample of it a passage which, some of the elect may think, does not show him at his best. But Danton's commendation of audacity, though not universally valid, is a word of wisdom to the advocate with a strong case. Alexander Smith's best is good with such a rare and delightful quality of goodness that his appreciator shows no great temerity in abandoning all reserves and concealments. He is not afraid of painting the wart, because it is overpowered by strength of feature and charm of expression. Alexander Smith, as he shows himself in his prose—in *Dreamthorp*, in *Last Leaves*, and in that entrancing book *A Summer in Skye*—is one of those writers concerning whom even a lover may tell not only the truth, but the whole truth. For myself, I read his essays when I was young and found

found them full of stimulation; I have read them again since I have become middle-aged, and have found them satisfyingly rest-giving. At no time have they been found wanting in something of rare and delicate delight. If criticism be indeed autobiography, no verdict upon the essays of Alexander Smith could well be at once more critical or more praiseful than this confession. I love Mr. Stevenson and my later contemporaries; but I think I must confess that I love my early contemporary, Mr. Stevenson's countryman and forerunner, better still.

Red Rose

By Leila Macdonald

WHY do your leaves uncurl invisibly?
Is it mere pride?
When I behold your petals,
They lie immovably against your breast;
Or opened wide,
Your shield thrown wide.
But none may watch the unveiling of your pride.

Why do you die so soon, so certainly?
Death is disgrace;
You should stay dying half your life;
Your drooping face
Gives you when dying your divinest face.
But death's pale colours are your sole disgrace

A Westmorland Village

By W. W. Russell

Margaret

By C. S.

THE street was feebly lighted, but by the glare from the public-house at the corner I could see her coming towards me, holding a jug in one hand and running the other along the railings in front of the houses as a boy does a stick. She walked swiftly but cautiously, and rather as if measuring a distance by counting the paces. As I came nearer, she shrank against the railings, and almost stopped; but as soon as I had passed she went on again more quickly than before. She must have heard me stop to look after her; for she paused for a moment, and turned her head as if listening, and then glided on through the darkness into the glare; and as she went into the public-house I caught sight of a tangle of heavy golden hair hanging down her back.

Presently she came back, keeping close to the houses as before, and in front of one of them about half-way down the street she stopped, and passed her hand along the tops of the railings as if feeling for something. She seemed satisfied, and pushing open the area gate went down the steps. "Is that you, Maggie?" cried a woman's voice—and a flood of light came up from the area. A door was hastily slammed, and all was dark again; but as I passed the house I noticed that the spike on the top of one of the railings was missing.

* * * * *

As

As I came round the corner by the public-house, I heard a hoarse shouting and clashing of pewter pots; and looking in through the ill-fitting flap doors, I saw a confused crowd of dirty, greasy men, struggling to get near the counter. I walked on more quickly down the street, hoping to be in time.

"Stop," I cried suddenly to the little figure creeping along by the houses. "You mustn't go there to-night. Stay here and give me the jug, and I'll bring the beer back to you."

She started, and caught hold of the railings with one hand. "Who are you?" she said, turning a pair of curiously dull eyes towards me.

"Come," said I, "stay here; I'll tell you all about that when I come back;" and I took hold of the jug.

"Why shouldn't I get it to-night? I go nearly every night, and often during the day as well; I know the way—and it isn't far."

"It's full of drunken men," I said; "you'd better stay here."

She gave up the jug and leant listlessly against the railings, keeping her eyes on the ground.

"Don't be long please; they're waiting for me at home. It's the first door on the left, and there's 'Jug and Bottle Entrance' on the glass in raised letters."

"This is an empty house," I said; "you can sit on the steps while I'm gone."

When I came back I found her standing by the door with one hand on the bell-handle.

"Did you say this house was empty?" she asked, as I held out the beer jug.

"Yes," I answered, glancing at the dirty windows in which bills were posted; "but why?"

"Because I've been ringing the bell all the time you've been away,

away, for fun; and because I don't like being left all alone in the dark street."

"You queer child! Besides it isn't dark a bit here—there's a lovely moon."

She gave a little shiver, and was silent.

"Why don't you take your beer?" and I offered her the jug once more.

She groped towards me and put her hands on my shoulders turning those large dull eyes up to mine.

"Can't you see I'm blind?" said she impatiently.

* * * * *

"It's rather wet to sit here to-night"—and I looked doubtfully at the doorway up which the wind blew the rain in gusts. She sat down on the top step, and spread her dress over the damp stone.

"Sit down here; we can lean against the pillar and be as dry as anything."

"How did you know there was a pillar?"

She pouted contemptuously. "Do you think I haven't my ways of seeing as well as you? I could describe this street much better than you for all your wonderful sight; besides, I found out all about this particular doorway that night when you first went and got the beer."

"Mind the jug!" I cried; but I was too late; for with a sweep of her arm the jug toppled over, and the beer rushed down the steps across the pavement into the gutter. She bit her lip. "Now don't crow over me: it doesn't follow that I shouldn't have done it even if I could see."

I kissed her forehead lightly.

"Never mind, dear heart; sit still. I won't be long getting some more."

"How

"How aunt would have abused poor Maggie if she hadn't had her beer," she remarked, as I sat down again after putting the jug against the door for safety.

"I shan't call you Maggie, as they call you that at home. I shall call you Margaret—Margaret with the glorious hair."

"Do you think it's really pretty—very pretty I mean?" she asked.

"Pretty," I echoed; "why it's the most wonderful and beautiful thing I have ever seen."

She gave a nervous little laugh, and shook her head so that her face was hidden in masses of gold.

"I wish I could see it: I can only feel it and know I have plenty of it;" and she frisked her head round so that the warm waves of colour rippled down my coat into my lap. "You may cut a little piece off if you like," she added with a sigh. I got out a pair of pocket scissors, and she folded her hands before her.

"You may take one skein; and mind you don't cut it off too near my head and leave an ugly gap with a stump at the top."

I put my hands gently under the soft warm hair, and choosing a strand rather darker than the rest cut a piece off the end.

"Let me feel it," she said—and I put the wisp into her hand.

She nodded contentedly and began fumbling at one of her stockings. I heard a snap, and presently she gave me a long cotton thread with which I tied the hair while she held it at each end.

"Aunt talks about giving up the house," she said, jerking her head in the direction of her home; "the lodgings don't pay much, and I heard her say that if she did she'd have to try and get me into some place for blind people—an asylum or something. Isn't it horrible?"

"Fancy shutting a sweet little golden darling like you up in an

asylum!" I cried: "it makes me sick to think of it." And catching her in my arms I pulled her back, and covered her face and neck and hair with kisses.

"Good-night, little golden thing," I said as she got up to go: "I shall come to-morrow as usual." And I put the jug into her hand, and set her by the railings.

"Take care of that little piece of my hair," she called; and I watched her gliding by the houses till she vanished down the area of her home.

* * * * *

But alas! It was fully a fortnight before I was able to visit the doorway again, and after waiting there in vain for some time I walked down the deserted street to the house where the spike was missing from the top of one of the railings.

The windows were quite dark, and on the door just above the letter-box was a piece of paper freshly pasted on. I went up the steps and struck a match and read:

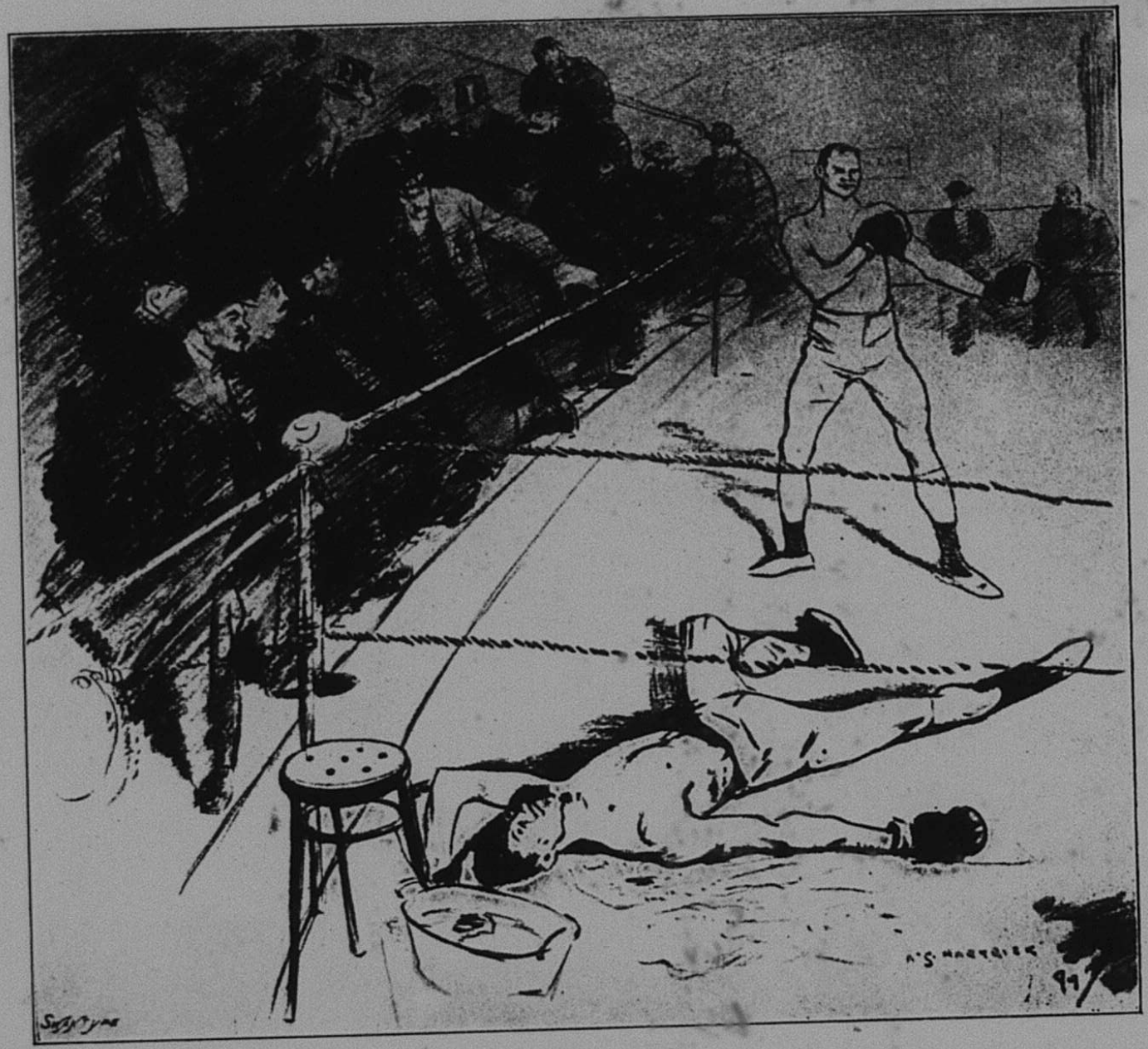
"TO LET

FOR KEYS APPLY No. 3 NEWLAND STREET."

I walked slowly back till I came to the empty house. The sight of the familiar doorway was too much for me, and sitting down I leant against the pillar and gave way to my grief.

The Knock-out

By A. S. Hartrick


A·S·HARTRICK
97

Of One in Russia

By Richard Garnett, LL.D.

Dove that of old fraught with the olive-spray
Toldest of earth arisen from the flood,
And how the grove in ancient station stood,
And badest man take courage and be gay ;

Vain for new leaf this January day
To search the savage waste of Scythian wood ;
Yet thither wend, of Clara's ill or good
Bringing back tidings on thy westering way.

Tell her the flame the brand should blithely fling
Dies on the hearth in ashes chill and drear,
And season vainly lengthens unto Spring
Since she forsook the love that held her here,
Sorrow and dread and many a joyless thing
Leaving in place of her that was so dear.

Theodora

A Fragment

By Victoria Cross

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I DID not turn out of bed till ten o'clock the next morning, and I was still in dressing-gown and slippers, sitting by the fire looking over a map, when Digby came in upon me.

"Hullo, Ray, only just up, eh? as usual?" was his first exclamation as he entered, his ulster buttoned to his chin, and the snow thick upon his boots. "What a fellow you are! I can't understand anybody lying in bed till ten o'clock in the morning."

"And I can't understand anybody driving up at seven," I said, smiling, and stirring my coffee idly. I had laid down the map with resignation. I knew Digby had come round to jaw for the next hour at least. "Can I offer you some breakfast?"

"Breakfast!" returned Digby contemptuously. "No, thanks. I had mine hours ago. Well, what do you think of her?"

"Of whom?—this Theodora?"

"Oh, it's Theodora already, is it?" said Digby, looking at me. "Well, never mind: go on. Yes, what do you think of her?"

"She seems rather clever, I think."

"Do

"Do you?" returned Digby, with a distinct accent of regret, as if I had told him I thought she squinted. "I never noticed it. But her looks, I mean?"

"She is very peculiar," I said, merely.

"But you like everything extraordinary. I should have thought her very peculiarity was just what would have attracted you."

"So it does," I admitted; "so much so, that I am going to take the trouble of calling this afternoon expressly to see her again."

Digby stared hard at me for a minute, and then burst out laughing. "By Jove! You've made good use of your time. Did she ask you?"

"She did," I said.

"This looks as if it would be a case," remarked Digby lightly, and then added, "I'd have given anything to have had her myself. But if it's not to be for me, I'd rather you should be the lucky man than any one else."

Don't you think all that is a little 'previous'?" I asked satirically, looking at him over the coffee, which stood on the map of Mesopotamia.

"Well, I don't know. You must marry some time, Cecil."

"Really!" I said, raising my eyebrows and regarding him with increased amusement. "I think I have heard of men remaining celibates before now, especially men with my tastes."

"Yes," said Digby, becoming suddenly as serious and thoughtful as if he were being called upon to consider some weighty problem, and of which the solution must be found in the next ten minutes. "I don't know how you would agree. She is an awfully religious girl."

"Indeed?" I said with a laugh. "How do you know?"

Digby thought hard.

"She

"She is," he said with conviction, at last. "I see her at church every Sunday."

"Oh then, of course she must be—proof conclusive," I answered.

Digby looked at me and then grumbled, "Confounded sneering fellow you are. Has she been telling you she is not?"

I remembered suddenly that I had promised Theodora not to repeat her opinions, so I only said, "I really don't know what she is; she may be most devout for all I know—or care."

"Of course you can profess to be quite indifferent," said Digby ungraciously. "But all I can say is, it doesn't look like it—your going there this afternoon; and anyway, she is not indifferent to you. She said all sorts of flattering things about you."

"Very kind, I am sure," I murmured derisively.

"And she sent round to my rooms this morning a thundering box of Havannahs in recognition of my having won the bet about your looks."

I laughed outright. "That's rather good biz for you! The least you can do is to let me help in the smoking of them, I think."

"Of course I will. But it shows what she thinks of you, doesn't it?"

"Oh, most convincingly," I said with mock earnestness. "Havannahs are expensive things."

"But you know how awfully rich she is, don't you?" asked Digby, looking at me as if he wanted to find out whether I were really ignorant or affecting to be so.

"My dear Charlie, you know I know nothing whatever about her except what you tell me—or do you suppose she showed me her banking account between the dances?"

"Don't know, I am sure," Digby grumbled back. "You sat in

in that passage long enough to be going through a banking account, and balancing it too, for that matter! However, the point is, she is rich—tons of money, over six thousand a year."

"Really?" I said, to say something.

"Yes, but she loses every penny on her marriage. Seems such a funny way to leave money to a girl, doesn't it? Some old pig of a maiden aunt tied it up in that way. Nasty thing to do, I think; don't you?"

"Very immoral of the old lady, it seems. A girl like that, if she can't marry, will probably forego nothing but the ceremony."

"She runs the risk of losing her money, though, if anything were known. She only has it *dum casta manet*, just like a separation allowance."

"Hard lines," I murmured sympathetically.

"And so of course her people are anxious she should make a good match—take some man, I mean, with an income equal to what she has now of her own, so that she would not feel any loss. Otherwise, you see, if she married a poor man, it would be rather a severe drop for her."

"Conditions calculated to prevent any fellow but a millionaire proposing to her, I should think," I said.

"Yes, except that she is a girl who does not care about money. She has been out now three seasons, and had one or two good chances and not taken them. Now myself, for instance, if she wanted money and position and so on, she could hardly do better, could she? And my family and the rest of it are all right; but she couldn't get over my red hair—I know it was that. She's mad upon looks—I know she is; she let it out to me once, and I bet you anything, she'd take you and chuck over her money and everything else, if you gave her the chance."

"I am

"I am certainly not likely to," I answered. All this you've just told me alone would be enough to choke me off. I have always thought I could never love a decent woman unselfishly enough, even if she gave up nothing for me; and, great heavens! I should be sorry to value myself, at—what do you say she has?—six thousand a year?"

"Leave the woman who falls in love with the cut of your nose to do the valuation. You'll be surprised at the figure!" said Digby with a touch of resentful bitterness, and getting up abruptly. "I'll look round in the evening," he added, buttoning up his overcoat. "Going to be in?"

"As far as I know," I answered, and he left.

I got up and dressed leisurely, thinking over what he had said, and those words "six thousand" repeating themselves unpleasantly in my brain.

The time was in accordance with strict formality when I found myself on her steps. The room I was shown into was large, much too large to be comfortable on such a day; and I had to thread my way through a perfect maze of gilt-legged tables and statuette-bearing tripods before I reached the hearth. Here burnt a small, quiet, chaste-looking fire, a sort of Vestal flame, whose heat was lost upon the tesselated tiles, white marble, and polished brass about it. I stood looking down at it absently for a few minutes, and then Theodora came in.

She was very simply dressed in some dark stuff that fitted closely to her, and let me see the harmonious lines of her figure as she came up to me. The plain, small collar of the dress opened at the neck, and a delicious, solid, white throat rose from the dull stuff like an almond bursting from its husk. On the pale, well-cut face and small head great care had evidently been bestowed. The eyes were darkened, as last night, and the hair arranged with infinite

infinite pains on the forehead and rolled into one massive coil at the back of her neck.

She shook hands with a smile—a smile that failed to dispel the air of fatigue and fashionable dissipation that seemed to cling to her; and then wheeled a chair as near to the fender as she could get it.

As she sat down, I thought I had never seen such splendid shoulders combined with so slight a hip before.

"Now I hope no one else will come to interrupt us," she said simply. "And don't let's bother to exchange comments on the weather or last night's dance. I have done that six times over this morning with other callers. Don't let's talk for the sake of getting through a certain number of words. Let us talk because we are interested in what we are saying."

"I should be interested in anything if you said it," I answered.

Theodora laughed. "Tell me something about the East, will you? That is a nice warm subject, and I feel so cold."

And she shot out towards the blaze two well-made feet and ankles.

"Yes, in three weeks' time I shall be in a considerably warmer climate than this," I answered, drawing my chair as close to hers as fashion permits.

Theodora look at me with a perceptibly startled expression as I spoke.

"Are you really going out so soon?" she said

"I am really," I said with a smile.

"Oh I am so sorry!"

"Why?" I asked merely.

"Because I was thinking I should have the pleasure of meeting you lots more times at different functions."

"And would that be a pleasure?"

"Yes, very great," said Theodora, with a smile lighting her eyes and parting faintly the soft scarlet lips.

She looked at me, a seducing softness melting all her face and swimming in the liquid darkness of the eyes she raised to mine. A delicious intimacy seemed established between us by that smile. We seemed nearer to each other after it than before, by many degrees. A month or two of time and ordinary intercourse may be balanced against the seconds of such a smile as this.

A faint feeling of surprise mingled with my thoughts, that she should show her own attitude of mind so clearly, but I believe she felt instinctively my attraction towards her, and also undoubtedly she belonged, and had always been accustomed, to a fast set. I was not the sort of man to find fault with her for that, and probably she had already been conscious of this, and felt all the more at ease with me. The opening-primrose type of woman, the girl who does or wishes to suggest the modest violet unfolding beneath the rural hedge, had never had a charm for me. I do not profess to admire the simple violet; I infinitely prefer a well-trained hothouse gardenia. And this girl, about whom there was nothing of the humble, crooked-neck violet—in whom there was a dash of virility, a hint at dissipation, a suggestion of a certain decorous looseness of morals and fastness of manners—could stimulate me with a keen sense of pleasure, as our eyes or hands met.

"Why would it be a pleasure to meet me?" I asked, holding her eyes with mine, and wondering whether things would so turn out that I should ever kiss those parting lips before me.

Theodora laughed gently.

"For a good many reasons that it would make you too conceited to hear," she answered. "But one is because you are more interesting

interesting to talk to than the majority of people I meet every day. The castor of your chair has come upon my dress. Will you move it back a little, please?"

I pushed my chair back immediately and apologised.

"Are you going alone?" resumed Theodora.

"Quite alone."

"Is that nice?"

"No. I should have been very glad to find some fellow to go with me, but it's rather difficult. It is not everybody that one meets whom one would care to make such an exclusive companion of, as a life like that out there necessitates. Still, there's no doubt I shall be dull unless I can find some chum there."

"Some Englishman, I suppose?"

"Possibly; but they are mostly snobs who are out there."

Theodora made a faint sign of assent, and we both sat silent, staring into the fire.

"Does the heat suit you?" Theodora asked, after a pause.

"Yes, I like it."

"So do I."

"I don't think any woman would like the climate I am going to now, or could stand it," I said.

Theodora said nothing, but I had my eyes on her face, which was turned towards the light of the fire, and I saw a tinge of mockery come over it.

We had neither said anything further, when the sound of a knock reached us, muffled, owing to the distance the sound had to travel to reach us by the drawing-room fire at all, but distinct in the silence between us.

Theodora looked at me sharply.

"There is somebody else. Do you want to leave yet?" she asked, and then added in a persuasive tone, "Come into my own study,

study, where we shan't be disturbed, and stay and have tea with me, will you?"

She got up as she spoke.

The room had darkened considerably while we had been sitting there, and only a dull light came from the leaden, snow-laden sky beyond the panes, but the firelight fell strongly across her figure as she stood, glancing and playing up it towards the slight waist, and throwing scarlet upon the white throat and under-part of the full chin. In the strong shadow on her face I could see merely the two seducing eyes. Easily excitable where once a usually hypercritical or rather hyperfanciful eye has been attracted, I felt a keen sense of pleasure stir me as I watched her rise and stand, that sense of pleasure which is nothing more than an assurance to the roused and unquiet instincts within one, of future satisfaction or gratification, with, from, or at the expense of the object creating the sensation. Unconsciously a certainty of possession of Theodora to-day, to-morrow, or next year, filled me for the moment as completely as if I had just made her my wife. The instinct that demanded her was immediately answered by a mechanical process of the brain, not with doubt or fear, but simple confidence. "This is a pleasant and delightful object to you—as others have been. Later it will be a source of enjoyment to you—as others have been." And the lulling of this painful instinct is what we know as pleasure. And this instinct and its answer are exactly that which we should not feel within us for any beloved object. It is this that tends inevitably to degrade the loved one, and to debase our own passion. If the object is worthy and lovely in any sense, we should be ready to love it as being such, for itself, as moralists preach to us of Virtue, as theologians preach to us of the Deity. To love or at least to strive to love an object for the object's sake, and not our own sake,

sake, to love it in its relation to *its* pleasure and not in its relation to our own pleasure, is to feel the only love which is worthy of offering to a fellow human being, the one which elevates—and the only one—both giver and receiver. If we ever learn this lesson, we learn it late. I had not learnt it yet.

I murmured a prescribed "I shall be delighted," and followed Theodora behind a huge red tapestry screen that reached half-way up to the ceiling.

We were then face to face with a door which she opened, and we both passed over the threshold together.

She had called the room her own, so I glanced round it with a certain curiosity. A room is always some faint index to the character of its occupier, and as I looked a smile came to my face. This room suggested everywhere, as I should have expected, an intellectual but careless and independent spirit. There were two or three tables, in the window, heaped up with books and strewn over with papers. The centre-table had been pushed away, to leave a clearer space by the grate, and an armchair, seemingly of unfathomable depths, and a sofa, dragged forward in its place. Within the grate roared a tremendous fire, banked up half-way to the chimney, and a short poker was thrust into it between the bars. The red light leapt over the whole room and made it brilliant, and glanced over a rug, and some tumbled cushions on the floor in front of the fender, evidently where she had been lying. Now, however, she picked up the cushions, and tossed them into the corner of the couch, and sat down herself in the other corner.

"Do you prefer the floor generally?" I asked, taking the armchair as she indicated it to me.

"Yes, one feels quite free and at ease lying on the floor, whereas on a couch its limits are narrow, and one has the constraint

straint and bother of taking care one does not go to sleep and roll off."

"But suppose you did, you would then but be upon the floor."

"Quite so; but I should have the pain of falling."

Our eyes met across the red flare of the firelight.

Theodora went on jestingly: "Now, these are the ethics of the couch and the floor. I lay myself voluntarily on the floor, knowing it thoroughly as a trifle low, but undeceptive and favourable to the condition of sleep which will probably arise, and suitable to my requirements of ease and space. I avoid the restricted and uncertain couch, recognising that if I fall to sleep on that raised level, and the desire to stretch myself should come, I shall awake with pain and shock to feel the ground, and see above me the couch from which I fell—do you see?"

She spoke lightly, and with a smile, and I listened with one. But her eyes told me that these ethics of the couch and floor covered the ethics of life.

"No, you must accept the necessity of the floor, I think, unless you like to forego your sleep and have the trouble of taking care to stick upon your couch; and for me the difference of level between the two is not worth the additional bother."

She laughed, and I joined her.

"What do you think?" she asked.

I looked at her as she sat opposite me, the firelight playing all over her, from the turn of her knee just marked beneath her skirt to her splendid shoulders, and the smooth soft hand and wrist supporting the distinguished little head. I did not tell her what I was thinking; what I said was: "You are very logical. I am quite convinced there's no place like the ground for a siesta."

Theodora laughed, and laid her hand on the bell.

A second

A second or two after, a door, other than the one we had entered by, opened, and a maid appeared.

"Bring tea and pegs," said Theodora, and the door shut again.

"I ordered pegs for you because I know men hate tea," she said. "That's my own maid. I never let any of the servants answer this bell except her; she has my confidence, as far as one ever gives confidence to a servant. I think she likes me. I like making myself loved," she added impulsively.

"You've never found the least difficulty in it, I should think," I answered, perhaps a shade more warmly than I ought, for the colour came into her cheek and a slight confusion into her eyes.

The servant's re-entry saved her from replying.

"Now tell me how you like your peg made, and I'll make it," said Theodora, getting up and crossing to the table when the servant had gone.

I got up, too, and protested against this arrangement.

Theodora turned round and looked up at me, leaning one hand on the table.

"Now, how ridiculous and conventional you are!" she said. "You would think nothing of letting me make you a cup of tea, and yet I must by no means mix you a peg!"

She looked so like a young fellow of nineteen as she spoke that half the sense of informality between us was lost, and there was a keen, subtle pleasure in this superficial familiarity with her that I had never felt with far prettier women. The half of nearly every desire is curiosity, a vague, undefined curiosity, of which we are hardly conscious; and it was this that Theodora so violently stimulated, while her beauty was sufficient to nurse the other half. This feeling of curiosity arises, of course, for any woman who may be new to us, and who has the power to move us at all. But generally, if it cannot be gratified for the particular one, it is more

or

or less satisfied by the general knowledge applying to them all; but here, as Theodora differed so much from the ordinary feminine type, even this instinctive sort of consolation was denied me. I looked down at her with a smile.

"We shan't be able to reconcile Fashion and Logic, so it's no use," I said. "Make the peg, then, and I'll try and remain in the fashion by assuming it's tea."

"Great Scott! I hope you wont fancy it's tea while you are drinking it!" returned Theodora laughing.

She handed me the glass, and I declared nectar wasn't in it with hat peg, and then she made her own tea and came and sat down to drink it, in not at all an indecorous, but still informal proximity.

"Did you collect anything in the East?" she asked me, after a minute or two.

"Yes; a good many idols and relics and curiosities of sorts," I answered. "Would you like to see them?"

"Very much," Theodora answered. "Where are they?"

"Well, not in my pocket," I said smiling. "At my chambers. Could you and Mrs. Long spare an afternoon and honour me with a visit there?"

"I should like it immensely. I know Helen will come if I ask her."

"When you have seen them I must pack them up, and send them to my agents. One can't travel about with those things."

A sort of tremor passed over Theodora's face as I spoke, and her glance met mine, full of demands and questionings, and a very distinct assertion of distress. It said distinctly, "I am so sorry you are going." The sorrow in her eyes touched my vanity deeply, which is the most responsive quality we have. It is difficult to reach our hearts or our sympathies, but our vanity is always

always available. I felt inclined to throw my arm round that supple-looking waist—and it was close to me—and say, "Don't be sorry; come too." I don't know whether my looks were as plain as hers, but Theodora rose carelessly, apparently to set her teacup down, and then did not resume her seat by me, but went back to the sofa on the other side of the rug. This, in the state of feeling into which I had drifted, produced an irritated sensation, and I was rather pleased than not when a gong sounded somewhere in the house and gave me a graceful opening to rise.

"May I hope to hear from you, then, which day you will like to come?" I asked, as I held out my hand.

Now this was the moment I had been expecting, practically, ever since her hand had left mine last night, the moment when it should touch it again. I do not mean consciously, but there are a million slight, vague physical experiences and sensations within us of which the mind remains unconscious. Theodora's white right hand rested on her hip, the light from above struck upon it, and I noted that all the rings had been stripped from it; her left was crowded with them, so that the hand sparkled at each movement, but not one remained on her right. I coloured violently for the minute as I recollected my last night's pressure, and the idea flashed upon me at once that she had removed them expressly to avoid the pain of having them ground into her flesh.

The next second Theodora had laid her hand confidently in mine. My mind, annoyed at the thought that had just shot through it, bade me take her hand loosely and let it go, but Theodora raised her eyes to me, full of a soft disappointment which seemed to say, "Are you not going to press it, then, after all, when I have taken off all the rings entirely that you may?" That look seemed to push away, walk over, ignore my reason, and appeal directly to the eager physical nerves and muscles.

Spontaneously,

Spontaneously, whether I would or not, they responded to it, and my fingers laced themselves tightly round this morsel of velvet-covered fire.

We forgot in those few seconds to say the orthodox good-byes; she forgot to answer my question. That which we were both saying to each other, though our lips did not open, was, "So I should like to hold and embrace you;" and she, "So I should like to be held and embraced."

Then she withdrew her hand, and I went out by the way of the drawing-room where we had entered.

In the hall her footman showed me out with extra obsequiousness. My three-hours' stay raised me, I suppose, to the rank of more than an ordinary caller.

It was dark now in the streets, and the temperature must have been somewhere about zero. I turned my collar up and started to walk sharply in the direction of my chambers. Walking always induces in me a tendency to reflection and retrospection, and now, removed from the excitment of Theodora's actual presence, my thoughts lapped quietly over the whole interview, going through it backwards, like the calming waves of a receding tide, leaving lingeringly the sand. There was no doubt that this girl attracted me very strongly, that the passion born yesterday was nearing adolescence; and there was no doubt, either, that I ought to strangle it now before it reached maturity. My thoughts, however, turned impatiently from this question, and kept closing and centring round the object itself, with maddening persistency. I laughed to myself as Schopenhauer's theory shot across me that all impulse to love is merely the impulse of the genius of the genus to select a fitting object which will help in producing a Third Life. Certainly the genius of the genus in me was weaker than the genius of my own individuality, in this instance, for Theodora was as unfitted, according

according to the philosopher's views, to become a co-worker with me in carrying out Nature's aim, as she was fitted to give me as an individual the strongest personal pleasure.

I remember Schopenhauer does admit that this instinct in man to choose some object which will best fulfil the duty of the race, is apt to be led astray, and it is fortunate he did not forget to make this admission, if his theory is to be generally applied, considering how very particularly often we are led astray, and that our strongest, fiercest passions and keenest pleasures are constantly not those suitable to, nor in accordance with, the ends of Nature. The sharpest, most violent stimulus, we may say, the true essence of pleasure, lies in some gratification which has no claim whatever, in any sense, to be beneficial or useful, or to have any ulterior motive, conscious or instinctive, or any lasting result, or any fulfilment of any object, but which is simple gratification and dies naturally in its own excess.

As we admit of works of pure genius that they cannot claim utility, or motive, or purpose, but simply that they exist as joy-giving and beautiful objects of delight, so must we have done with utility, motive, purpose, and the aims of Nature, before we can reach the most absolute degree of positive pleasure. To choose an admissible instance, a naturally hungry man, given a slice of bread, will he or will he not devour it with as great a pleasure as the craving drunkard feels in swallowing a draught of raw brandy?

In the first case a simple natural desire is gratified, and the aim of Nature satisfied; but the individual's longing and subsequent pleasure cannot be said to equal the furious craving of the drunkard, and his delirious sense of gratification as the brandy burns his throat.

My inclination towards Theodora could hardly be the simple, natural instinct, guided by natural selection, for then surely I should

should have been swayed towards some more womanly individual, some more vigorous and at the same time more feminine physique. In me, it was the mind that had first suggested to the senses, and the senses that had answered in a dizzy pleasure, that this passionate, sensitive frame, with its tensely-strung nerves and excitable pulses, promised the height of satisfaction to a lover. Surely to Nature it promised a poor if possible mother, and a still poorer nurse. And these desires and passions that spring from that border-land between mind and sense, and are nourished by the suggestions of the one and the stimulus of the other, have a stronger grip upon our organisation, because they offer an acuter pleasure, than those simple and purely physical ones in which Nature is striving after her own ends and using us simply as her instruments.

I thought on in a desultory sort of way, more or less about Theodora, and mostly about the state of my own feelings, until I reached my chambers. There I found Digby, and in his society, with his chaff and gabble in my ears, all reflection and philosophy fled, without leaving me any definite decision made.

The next afternoon but one found myself and Digby standing at the windows of my chambers awaiting Theodora's arrival. I had invited him to help me entertain the two women, and also to help me to unearth and dust my store of idols and curiosities, and range them on the tables for inspection. There were crowds of knick-knacks picked up in the crooked streets and odd corners of Benares, presents made to me, trifles bought in the Cairo bazaars, and vases and coins discovered below the soil in the regions of the Tigris. Concerning several of the most typical objects Digby and I had had considerable difference of opinion. One highly interesting bronze model of the monkey-god at Benares he had declared I could not exhibit on account of its too pronounced realism and insufficient attention to the satorial art. I had insisted

insisted that the god's deficiencies in this respect were not more striking than the objects in flesh-tints, hung at the Academy, that Theodora viewed every season.

"Perhaps not," he answered. "But this is *not* in pink and white, and hung on the Academy walls for the public to stare at, and therefore you can't let her see it."

This was unanswerable. I yielded, and the monkey-god was wheeled under a side-table out of view.

Every shelf and stand and table had been pressed into the service, and my rooms had the appearance of a corner in an Egyptian bazaar, now when we had finished our preparations.

"There they are," said Digby, as Mrs. Long's victoria came in sight.

Theodora was leaning back beside her sister, and it struck me then how representative she looked, as it were, of herself and her position. From where we stood we could see down into the victoria, as it drew up at our door. Her knees were crossed under the blue carriage-rug, on the edge of which rested her two small pale-gloved hands. A velvet jacket, that fitted her as its skin fits the grape, showed us her magnificent shoulders, and the long easy slope of her figure to the small waist. On her head in the least turn of which lay the acme of distinction, amongst the black glossy masses of her hair, sat a small hat in vermilion velvet, made to resemble the Turkish fez. As the carriage stopped, she glanced up; and a brilliant smile swept over her face, as she bowed slightly to us at the window. The handsome painted eyes, the naturally scarlet lips, the pallor of the oval face, and each well-trained movement of the distinguished figure, as she rose and stepped from the carriage, were noted and watched by our four critical eyes.

"A typical product of our nineteenth-century civilisation," I said,

said, with a faint smile, as Theodora let her fur-edged skirt draw over the snowy pavement, and we heard her clear cultivated tones, with the fashionable drag in them, ordering the coachman not to let the horses get cold.

"But she's a splendid sort of creature, don't you think?" asked Digby. "Happy the man who——eh?"

I nodded. "Yes," I assented. "But how much that man should have to offer, old chap, that's the point; that six thousand of hers seems an invulnerable protection."

"I suppose so," said Digby with a nervous yawn. "And to think I have more than double that and yet——It's a pity. Funny it will be if my looks and your poverty prevent either of us having her."

"My own case is settled," I said decisively. "My position and hers decide it for me."

"I'd change places with you this minute if I could," muttered Digby moodily, as steps came down to our door, and we went forward to meet the women as they entered.

It seemed to arrange itself naturally that Digby should be occupied in the first few seconds with Mrs. Long, and that I should be free to receive Theodora.

Of all the lesser emotions, there is hardly any one greater than that subtle sense of pleasure felt when a woman we love crosses for the first time our own threshold. We may have met her a hundred times in her house, or on public ground, but the sensation her presence then creates is altogether different from that instinctive, involuntary, momentary and delightful sense of ownership that rises when she enters any room essentially our own.

It is the very illusion of possession.

With this hatefully egoistic satisfaction infused through me, I drew

drew forward for her my own favourite chair, and Theodora sank into it, and her tiny, exquisitely-formed feet sought my fender-rail. At a murmured invitation from me, she unfastened and laid aside her jacket. Beneath, she revealed some purplish, silk-like material, that seemed shot with different colours as the firelight fell upon it. It was strained tight and smooth upon her, and the swell of a low bosom was distinctly defined below it. There was no excessive development, quite the contrary, but in the very slightness there was an indescribably sensuous curve, and a depression, rising and falling, that seemed as if it might be the very home itself of passion. It was a breast with little suggestion of the duties or powers of Nature, but with infinite seduction for a lover.

"What a marvellous collection you have here," she said throwing her glance round the room. "What made you bring home all these things?"

"The majority were gifts to me—presents made by the different natives whom I visited or came into connection with in various ways. A native is never happy, if he likes you at all, until he has made you some valuable present."

"You must be very popular with them indeed," returned Theodora, glancing from a brilliant Persian carpet, suspended on the wall, to a gold and ivory model of a temple, on the console by her side.

"Well, when one stays with a fellow as his guest, as I have done with some of these small rajahs and people, of course one tries to make oneself amiable."

"The fact is, Miss Dudley," interrupted Digby, "Ray admires these fellows, and that is why they like him. Just look at this sketch-book of his—what trouble he has taken to make portraits of them."

And

And he stretched out a limp-covered pocket album of mine.

I reddened slightly and tried to intercept his hand.

"Nonsense, Digby. Give the book to me," I said; but Theodora had already taken it, and she looked at me as I spoke with one of those delicious looks of hers that could speak so clearly. Now it seemed to say, "If you are going to love me, you must have no secrets from me." See opened the book and I was subdued and let her. I did not much care, except that it was some time now since I had looked at it, and I did not know what she might find in it. However, Theodora was so different from girls generally, that it did not greatly matter.

"Perhaps these are portraits of your different conquests amongst the Ranees, are they?" she said. I don't see 'my victims,' though, written across the outside as the Frenchmen write on their albums."

"No," I said, with a smile, "I think these are only portraits of men whose appearance struck me. The great difficulty is to persuade any Mohammedan to let you draw him."

The very first leaf she turned seemed to give the lie to my words. Against a background of yellow sand and blue sky, stood out a slight figure in white, bending a little backward, and holding in its hands, extended on either side, the masses of its black hair that fell through them till they touched the sand by its feet. Theodora threw a slide glance full of derision on me, as she raised her eyes from the page.

"I swear it isn't," I said hastily, colouring, for I saw she thought it was a woman. "It's a young Sikh I bribed to let me paint him."

"Oh, a young Sikh, is it?" said Theodora, bending over the book again. "Well it's a lovely face; and what beautiful hair!"

"Yes, almost as beautiful as yours," I murmured, in safety, for the

the others were wholly occupied in testing the limits of the flexibility of the soapstone.

Not for any consideration in this world could I have restrained the irresistible desire to say the words, looking at her sitting sideways to me, noting that shining weight of hair lying on the white neck, and that curious masculine shade upon the upper lip. A faint liquid smile came to her face.

"Mine is not so long as that when you see it undone," she said, looking at me.

"How long is it?" I asked mechanically, turning over the leaves of the sketch-book, and thinking in a crazy sort of way what I would not give to see her with that hair unloosed, and have the right to lift a single strand of it.

"It would not touch the ground," she answered, "it must be about eight inches off it, I think."

"A marvellous length for a European," I answered in a conventional tone, though it was a difficulty to summon it.

Within my brain all the dizzy thoughts seemed reeling together till they left me hardly conscious of anything but an acute painful sense of her proximity.

"Find me the head of a Persian, will you?" came her voice next.

"A Persian?" I repeated mechanically.

Theodora looked at me wonderingly and I recalled myself.

"Oh, yes," I answered, "I'll find you one. Give me the book."

I took the book and turned over the leaves towards the end. As I did so, some of the intermediate pages caught her eye, and she tried to arrest the turning leaves.

"What is that? Let me see."

"It is nothing," I said, passing them over. "Allow me to find you the one you want."

Theodora did not insist, but her glance said: "I will be revenged for this resistance to my wishes!"

When I had found her the portrait, I laid the open book back upon her knees. Theodora bent over it with an unaffected exclamation of delight. "How exquisite! and how well you have done it! What a talent you must have!"

"Oh no, no talent," I said hastily. "It's easy to do a thing like that when your heart is in it."

Theodora looked up at me and said simply, "This is a woman."

And I looked back in her eyes and said as simply, "Yes, it is a woman."

Theodora was silent, gazing at the open leaf, absorbed. And half-unconsciously my eyes followed hers and rested with hers on the page.

Many months had gone by since I had opened the book; and many, many cigars, that according to Tolstoi deaden every mental feeling, and many, many pints of brandy that do the same thing, only more so, had been consumed, since I had last looked upon that face. And now I saw it over the shoulder of this woman. And the old pain revived and surged through me, but it was dull—dull as every emotion must be in the near neighbourhood of a new object of desire—every emotion except one.

"Really it is a very beautiful face, isn't it?" she said at last, with a tender and sympathetic accent, and as she raised her head our eyes met.

I looked at her and answered, "I should say yes, if we were not looking at it together, but you know beauty is entirely a question of comparison."

Her face was really not one-tenth so handsome as the mere shadowed, inanimate representation of the Persian girl, beneath our

our hands. I knew it and so did she. Theodora herself would have been the first to admit it. But nevertheless the words were ethically true. True in the sense that underlay the society compliment, for no beauty of the dead can compare with that of the living. Such are we, that as we love all objects in their relation to our own pleasure from them, so even in our admiration, the greatest beauty, when absolutely useless to us, cannot move us as a far lesser degree has power to do, from which it is possible to hope, however vaguely, for some personal gratification. And to this my words would come if translated. And I think Theodora understood the translation rather than the conventional form of them, for she did not take the trouble to deprecate the flattery.

I got up, and, to change the subject, said, "Let me wheel up that little table of idols. Some of them are rather curious."

I moved the tripod up to the arm of her chair.

Theodora closed the sketch-book and put it beside her, and looked over the miniature bronze gods with interest. Then she stretched out her arm to lift and move several of them, and her soft fingers seemed to lie caressingly—as they did on everything they touched—on the heads and shoulders of the images. I watched her, envying those senseless little blocks of brass.

"This is the Hindu equivalent of the Greek Aphrodite," I said, lifting forward a small, unutterably hideous, squat female figure, with the face of a monkey, and two closed wings of a dragon on its shoulders.

"Oh, Venus," said Theodora. "We must certainly crown her amongst them, though hardly, I think, in this particular case, for her beauty!"

And she laughingly slipped off a diamond half-hoop from her middle finger, and slipped the ring on to the model's head. It fitted exactly round the repulsive brows of the deformed and stunted

stunted image, and the goddess stood crowned in the centre of the table, amongst the other figures, with the circlet of brilliants, flashing brightly in the firelight, on her head. As Theodora passed the ring from her own warm white finger on to the forehead of the misshapen idol, she looked at me. The look, coupled with the action, in my state, went home to those very inner cells of the brain where are the springs themselves of passion. At the same instant the laughter and irresponsible gaiety and light pleasure on the face before me, the constrast between the delicate hand and the repellent monstrosity it had crowned—the sinister, allegorical significance—struck me like a blow. An unexplained feeling of rage filled me. Was it against her, myself, her action, or my own desires? It seemed for the moment to burn against them all. On the spur of it, I dragged forward to myself another of the images from behind the Astarte, slipped off my own signet-ring, and put it on the head of the idol.

"This is the only one for me to crown," I said bitterly, with a laugh, feeling myself whiten with the stress and strain of a host of inexplicable sensations that crowded in upon me, as I met Theodora's lovely inquiring glance.

There was a shade of apprehensiveness in her voice as she said, "What is that one?"

"Shiva," I said curtly, looking her straight in the eyes. "The god of self-denial."

I saw the colour die suddenly out of her face, and I knew I had hurt her. But I could not help it. With her glance she had summoned me to approve or second her jesting act. It was a challenge I could not pass over. I must in some correspondingly joking way either accept or reject her coronation. And to reject it was all I could do, since this woman must be nothing to me. There was a second's blank pause of strained silence. But, superficially

ficially, we had not strayed off the legitimate ground of mere society nothings, whatever we might feel lay beneath them. And Theodora was trained thoroughly in the ways of fashion.

The next second she leant back in her chair, saying lightly, "A false, absurd, and unnatural god; it is the greatest error to strive after the impossible; it merely prevents you accomplishing the possible. Gods like these," and she indicated the abominable squint-eyed Venus, "are merely natural instincts personified, and one may well call them gods since they are invincible. Don't you remember the fearful punishments that the Greeks represented as overtaking mortals who dared to resist nature's laws, that they chose to individualise as their gods? You remember the fate of Hippolytus who tried to disdain Venus, of Pentheus who tried to subdue Bacchus? These two plays teach the immortal lesson that if you have the presumption to try to be greater than nature she will in the end take a terrible revenge. The most we can do is to guide her. You can never be her conqueror. Consider yourself fortunate if she allows you to be her charioteer."

It was all said very lightly and jestingly, but at the last phrase there was a flash in her eye, directed upon me—yes, me—as if she read down into my inner soul, and it sent the blood to my face.

As the last word left her lips, she stretched out her hand and deliberately took my ring from the head of Shiva, put it above her own diamonds on the other idol, and laid the god I had chosen, the god of austerity and mortification, prostrate on its face, at the feet of the leering Venus.

Then, without troubling to find a transition phrase, she got up and said, "I am going to look at that Persian carpet."

It had all taken but a few seconds; the next minute we were over by the carpet, standing in front of it and admiring its hues in the

the most orthodox terms. The images were left as she had placed them. I could do nothing less, of course, than yield to a woman and my guest. The jest had not gone towards calming my feelings, nor had those two glances of hers—the first so tender and appealing as she had crowned the Venus, the second so virile and mocking as she had discrowned the Shiva. There was a strange mingling of extremes in her. At one moment she seemed will-less, deliciously weak, a thing only made to be taken in one's arms and kissed. The next, she was full of independent uncontrollable determination and opinion. Most men would have found it hard to be indifferent to her. When beside her you must either have been attracted or repelled. For me, she was the very worst woman that could have crossed my path.

As I stood beside her now, her shoulder only a little below my own, her neck and the line of her breast just visible to the side vision of my eye, and heard her talking of the carpet, I felt there was no price I would not have paid to have stood for one half-hour in intimate confidence with her, and been able to tear the veils from this irritating character.

From the carpet we passed on to a table of Cashmere work and next to a pile of Mohammedan garments. These had been packed with my own personal luggage, and I should not have thought of bringing them forth for inspection. It was Digby who, having seen them by chance in my portmanteau, had insisted that they would add interest to the general collection of Eastern trifles. "Clothes, my dear fellow, clothes; why, they will probably please her more than anything else."

Theodora advanced to the heap of stuffs and lifted them.

"What is the history of these?" she said laughing. "These were not resents to you!"

"No," I murmured. "Bought in the native bazaars."

"Some perhaps," returned Theodora, throwing her glance over them. "But a great many are not new."

It struck me that she would not be a woman very easy to deceive. Some men value a woman in proportion to the ease with which they can impose upon her, but to me it is too much trouble to deceive at all, so that the absence of that amiable quality did not disquiet me. On the contrary, the comprehensive, cynical, and at the same time indulgent smile that came so readily to Theodora's lips charmed me more, because it was the promise of even less trouble than a real or professed obtuseness.

"No," I assented merely.

"Well, then?" asked Theodora, but without troubling to seek a reply. "How pretty they are and how curious! this one, for instance." And she took up a blue silk zouave, covered with gold embroidery, and worth perhaps about thirty pounds. "This has been a good deal worn. It is a souvenir, I suppose?"

I nodded. With any other woman I was similarly anxious to please I should have denied it, but with her I felt it did not matter.

"Too sacred perhaps, then, for me to put on?" she asked with her hand in the collar, and smiling derisively.

"Oh dear no!" I said, "not at all. Put it on by all means."

"Nothing is sacred to you, eh; I see. Hold it then."

She gave me the zouave and turned for me to put it on her. A glimpse of the back of her white neck, as she bent her head forward, a convulsion of her adorable shoulders as she drew on the jacket, and the zouave was fitted on. Two seconds perhaps, but myself control wrapped round me had lost one of its skins.

"Now I must find a turban or fez," she said, turning over gently, but without any ceremony, the pile. "Oh, here's one!" She drew out a white fez, also embroidered in gold, and, removing her

her hat, put it on very much to one side, amongst her black hair, with evident care lest one of those silken inflected waves should be disturbed; and then affecting an undulating gait, she walked over to the fire.

"How do you like me in Eastern dress, Helen?" she said, addressing her sister, for whom Digby was deciphering some old coins. Digby and I confessed afterwards to each other the impulse that moved us both to suggest it was not at all complete without the trousers. I did offer her a cigarette, to enhance the effect.

"Quite passable, really," said Mrs. Long, leaning back and surveying her languidly.

Theodora took the cigarette with a laugh, lighted and smoked it, and it was then, as she leant against the mantel-piece with her eyes full of laughter, a glow on her pale skin, and an indolent relaxation in the long, supple figure, that I first said, or rather an involuntary, unrecognised voice within me said, "It is no good; whatever happens I must have you."

"Do you know that it is past six, Theo?" said Mrs. Long.

"You will let me give you a cup of tea before you go?" I said.

"Tea!" repeated Theodora. "I thought you were going to say haschisch or opium, at the least, after such an Indian afternoon."

"I have both," I answered, "would you like some?" thinking, "By Jove, I should like to see you after the haschisch."

"No," replied Theodora, "I make it a rule not to get intoxicated in public."

When the women rose to go, Theodora, to my regret, divested herself of the zouave without my aid, and declined it also for putting on her own cloak. As they stood drawing on their gloves I asked if they thought there was anything worthy of their acceptance

acceptance amongst these curiosities. Mrs. Long chose from the table near her an ivory model of the Taj, and Digby took it up to carry for her to the door. As he did so his eye caught the table of images.

"This is your ring, Miss Dudley, I believe," he said.

I saw him grin horridly as he noted the arrangement of the figures. Doubtless he thought it was mine.

I took up my signet-ring again, and Theodora said carelessly, without the faintest tinge of colour rising in her cheek, "Oh, yes, I had forgotten it. Thanks."

She took it from him and replaced it.

I asked her if she would honour me as her sister had done.

"There is one thing in this room that I covet immensely," she said, meeting my gaze.

"It is yours, of course, then," I answered. "What is it?"

Theodora stretched out her open hand. "Your sketch-book."

For a second I felt the blood dye suddenly all my face. The request took me by surprise, for one thing; and immediately after the surprise followed the vexatious and embarrassing thought that she had asked for the one thing in the room that I certainly did not wish her to have. The book contained a hundred thousand memories, embodied in writing, sketching, and painting, of those years in the East. There was not a page in it that did not reflect the emotions of the time when it had been filled in, and give a chronicle of the life lived at the date inscribed on it. It was a sort of diary in cipher, and to turn over its leaves was to relieve the hours they represented. For my own personal pleasure I liked the book and wanted to keep it, but there were other reasons too why I disliked the idea of surrendering it. It flashed through me, the question as to what her object was in possessing herself of it. Was it jealousy of the faces or any face within it that prompted her and

and would she amuse herself, when she had it, by tearing out the leaves or burning it? To give over these portraits merely to be sacrificed to a petty feminine spite and malice, jarred upon me. Involuntarily I looked hard into her eyes to try and read her intentions, and I felt I had wronged her. The eyes were full of the softest, tenderest light. It was impossible to imagine them vindictive. She had seen my hesitation and she smiled faintly.

"Poor Herod with your daughter of Herodias," she said, softly. "Never mind, I will not take it."

The others who had been standing with her saw there was some embarrassment that they did not understand, and Mrs. Long turned to go slowly down the corridor. Digby had to follow. Theodora was left standing alone before me, her seductive figure framed in the open doorway. Of course she was irresistible. Was she not the new object of my desires?

I seized the sketch-book from the chair. What did anything matter?

"Yes," I said hastily, putting it into that soft, small hand before it could draw back. "Forgive me the hesitation. You know I would give you anything."

If she answered or thanked me, I forget it. I was sensible of nothing at the moment but that the blood seemed flowing to my brain, and thundering through it, in ponderous waves. Then I knew we were walking down the passage, and in a few minutes more we should have said good-bye, and she would be gone.

An acute and yet vague realisation came upon me that the corridor was dark, and that the others had gone on in front, a confused recollection of the way she had lauded Nature and its domination a short time back, and then all these were lost again in the eddying torrent of an overwhelming desire to take her in my arms and hold her, control her, assert my will over hers, this

exasperating object who had been pleasing and seducing every sense for the last three hours, and now was leaving them all unsatisfied. That impulse towards some physical demonstration, that craving for physical contact, which attacks us suddenly with its terrific impetus, and chokes and stifles us, ourselves, beneath it, blinding us to all except itself, rushed upon me then, walking beside her in the dark passage; and at that instant Theodora sighed.

"I am tired," she said languidly. "May I take your arm?" and her hand touched me.

I did not offer her my arm, I flung it round her neck, bending back her head upon it, so that her lips were just beneath my own as I leant over her, and I pressed mine on them in a delirium of passion.

Everything that should have been remembered I forgot.

Knowledge was lost of all, except those passive, burning lips under my own. As I touched them, a current of madness seemed to mingle with my blood, and pass flaming through all my veins.

I heard her moan, but for that instant I was beyond the reach of pity or reason, I only leant harder on her lips in a wild, unheeding, unsparing frenzy. It was a moment of ecstasy that I would have bought with years of my life. One moment, the next I released her, and so suddenly, that she reeled against the wall of the passage. I caught her wrist to steady her. We dared neither of us speak, for the others were but little ahead of us; but I sought her eyes in the dusk.

They met mine, and rested on them, gleaming through the darkness. There was no confusion nor embarrassment in them, they were full of the hot clear, blinding light of passion; and I knew there would be no need to crave forgiveness.

The

The next moment had brought us up to the others, and to the end of the passage.

Mrs. Long turned round, and held out her hand to me.

"Good-bye," she said. "We have had a most interesting afternoon."

It was with an effort that I made some conventional remark.

Theodora, with perfect outward calm, shook hands with myself and Digby, with her sweetest smile, and passed out.

I lingered some few minutes with Digby, talking; and then he went off to his own diggings, and I returned slowly down the passage to my rooms.

My blood and pulses seemed beating as they do in fever, my ears seemed full of sounds, and that kiss burnt like the brand of hot iron on my lips. When I reached my rooms, I locked the door and flung both the windows open to the snowy night. The white powder on the ledge crumbled and drifted in.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Two Songs

By Charles Sydney

I

My love is selfish and unfair,
Her kisses fall so thick and fast,
That while I wait to give my share,
The priceless time is past.

And I have been to blame till now,
For I have let her do her will;
I thought it courteous to allow
My love to take her fill,

Trusting a time would quickly be,
When she would stay and look for mine;
But having borne it patiently,
I will no longer pine.

I'll fold her in my arms to-night,
And justice on her lips I'll wreak:
I'll teach my love to know the right,
And not oppress the meek!

II

BEAR thyself with formal gait,
Be thy language all sedate;
Thy opinions take on trust,
Take gold for thy only lust.

Shun belief devout or deep,
Ever to the safe side keep;
Let thy hollow laugh be framed
To the joke by all acclaimed.

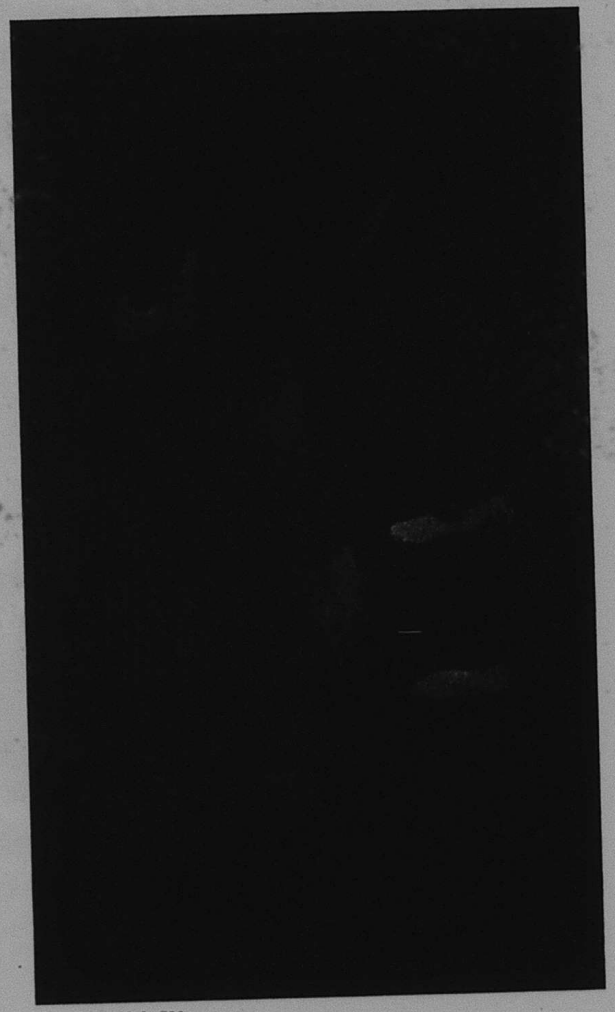
Never for pure charity
Level a disparity;
Farm thy favour to a fool,
Make his gratitude thy tool.

Let thy conscience be a thing
Like a clock to go, and ring
Just that time the hour doth mark.
Let some other light the dark!

Friend and wife a bargain buy
There where state and money lie;
Claim a goodly cenotaph,
Buy a lying epitaph!

Design for a Fan

By Charles Conder



A Falling Out

By Kenneth Grahame

HAROLD told me the main facts of this episode, some time later—in bits, and with reluctance. It was not a recollection he cared to talk about. The crude blank misery of a moment is apt to leave a dull bruise which is slow to depart, if indeed it ever does so entirely ; and Harold confesses to a twinge or two, still, at times, like the veteran who brings home a bullet inside him from martial plains over sea.

He knew he was a brute the moment after he had done it ; Selina had not meant to worry, only to comfort and assist. But his soul was one raw sore within him, when he found himself shut up in the schoolroom after hours, merely for insisting that 7 times 7 amounted to 47. The injustice of it seemed so flagrant. Why not 47 as much as 49? One number was no prettier than the other to look at, and it was evidently only a matter of arbitrary taste and preference, and, anyhow, it had always been 47 to him, and would be to the end of time. So when Selina came in out of the sun, leaving the Trappers of the Far West behind her, and putting off the glory of being an Apache squaw in order to hear him his tables and win his release, Harold turned on her venomously, rejected her kindly overtures, and even drove his elbow into her sympathetic ribs, in his determination to be left alone in the glory

glory of sulks. The fit passed directly, his eyes were opened, and his soul sat in the dust as he sorrowfully began to cast about for some atonement heroic enough to salve the wrong.

Needless to say, Selina demanded no sacrifice nor heroics whatever; she didn't even want him to say he was sorry. If he would only make it up, she would have done the apologising part herself. But that was not a boy's way. Something solid, Harold felt, was due from him; and until that was achieved, making up must not be thought of, in order that the final effect might not be spoilt. Accordingly, when his release came, and poor Selina hung about, trying to catch his eye, Harold, possessed by the demon of a distorted motive, avoided her steadily—though he was bleeding inwardly at every minute of delay—and came to me instead.

Of course I approved his plan highly; it was so much better than just going and making it up tamely, which any one could do; and a girl who had been jobbed in the ribs by a hostile elbow could not be expected for a moment to overlook it, without the liniment of an offering to soothe her injured feelings.

"I know what she wants most," said Harold. "She wants that set of tea-things in the toy-shop window, with the red and blue flowers on 'em; she's wanted it for months, 'cos her dolls are getting big enough to have real afternoon tea; and she wants it so badly that she won't walk that side of the street when we go into the town. But it costs five shillings!"

Then we set to work seriously, and devoted the afternoon to a realisation of assets and the composition of a Budget that might have been dated without shame from Whitehall. The result worked out as follows:

	s.	d.
By one uncle, unspent through having been lost for nearly a week—turned up at last in the straw of the dog-kennel	2	6
By advance from me on security of next uncle, and failing that, to be called in at Christmas	1	0
By shaken out of missionary-box with the help of a knife-blade. (They were our own pennies and a forced levy)		4
By bet due from Edward, for walking across the field where Farmer Larkin's bull was, and Edward bet him twopence he wouldn't—called in with difficulty .		2
By advance from Martha, on no security at all, only you mustn't tell your aunt	1	0
Total	5	0

and at last we breathed again.

The rest promised to be easy. Selina had a tea-party at five on the morrow, with the chipped old wooden tea-things that had served her successive dolls from babyhood. Harold would slip off directly after dinner, going alone, so as not to arouse suspicion, as we were not allowed to go into the town by ourselves. It was nearly two miles to our small metropolis, but there would be plenty of time for him to go and return, even laden with the olive-branch neatly packed in shavings; besides, he might meet the butcher, who was his friend and would give him a lift. Then, finally, at five, the rapture of the new tea-service, descended from the skies; and then, retribution made, making up at last, without loss of dignity. With the event before us, we thought it a small thing that twenty-four hours more of alienation and pretended sulks must be kept up on Harold's part; but Selina, who naturally knew nothing of the treat in store for her,

her, moped for the rest of the evening, and took a very heavy heart to bed.

When next day the hour for action arrived, Harold evaded Olympian attention with an easy modesty born of long practice, and made off for the front gate. Selina, who had been keeping her eye upon him, thought he was going down to the pond to catch frogs, a joy they had planned to share together, and slipped out after him; but Harold, though he heard her footsteps, continued sternly on his high mission, without even looking back; and Selina was left to wander disconsolately among flower-beds that had lost—for her—all scent and colour. I saw it all, and, although cold reason approved our line of action, instinct told me we were brutes.

Harold reached the town—so he recounted afterwards—in record time, having run most of the way for fear lest the tea-things, which had reposed six months in the window, should be snapped up by some other conscious-stricken lacerator of a sister's feelings; and it seemed hardly credible to find them still there, and their owner willing to part with them for the price marked on the ticket. He paid his money down at once, that there should be no drawing back from the bargain; and then, as the things had to be taken out of the window and packed, and the afternoon was yet young, he thought he might treat himself to a taste of urban joys and *la vie de Bohème*. Shops came first, of course, and he flattened his nose successively against the window with the india-rubber balls in it, and the clock-work locomotive: and against the barber's window, with wigs on blocks, reminding him of uncles, and shaving-cream that looked so good to eat; and the grocer's window, displaying more currants than the whole British population could possibly consume without a special effort; and the window of the bank, wherein gold was

was thought so little of that it was dealt about in shovels. Next there was the market-place, with all its clamorous joys; and when a runaway calf came down the street like a cannon-ball, Harold felt that he had not lived in vain. The whole place was so brimful of excitement that he had quite forgotten the why and the wherefore of his being there, when a sight of the church clock recalled him to his better self, and sent him flying out of the town, as he realized he had only just time enough left to get back in. If he were after his appointed hour, he would not only miss his high triumph, but probably would be detected as a transgressor of bounds—a crime before which a private opinion on multiplication sank to nothingness. So he jogged along on his homeward way, thinking of many things, and probably talking to himself a good deal, as his habit was. He must have covered nearly half the distance, when suddenly—a deadly sinking in the pit of the stomach—a paralysis of every limb—around him a world extinct of light and music—a black sun and a reeling sky—he had forgotten the tea-things!

It was useless, it was hopeless, all was over, and nothing could now be done; nevertheless he turned and ran back wildly, blindly, choking with the big sobs that evoked neither pity nor comfort from a merciless, mocking world around; a stitch in his side, dust in his eyes, and black despair clutching at his heart. So he stumbled on, with leaden legs and bursting sides, till—as if Fate had not yet dealt him her last worst buffet—on turning a corner in the road he almost ran under the wheels of a dog-cart, in which, as it pulled up, was apparent the portly form of Farmer Larkin, the arch-enemy whose ducks he had been shying stones at that very morning!

Had Harold been in his right and unclouded senses, he would have vanished through the hedge some seconds earlier, rather than pain

pain the farmer by any unpleasant reminiscences which his appearance might call up; but as things were he could only stand and blubber hopelessly, caring, indeed, little now what further ill might befall him. The farmer, for his part, surveyed the desolate figure with some astonishment, calling out in no unfriendly accents, "What, Master Harold! whatever be the matter? Baint runnin' away, be ee?"

Then Harold, with the unnatural courage born of desperation, flung himself on the step, and, climbing into the cart, fell in the straw at the bottom of it, sobbing out that he wanted to go back, go back! The situation had a vagueness; but the farmer, a man of action rather than words, swung his horse round smartly, and they were in the town again by the time Harold had recovered himself sufficiently to furnish some details. As they drove up to the shop, the woman was waiting at the door with the parcel; and hardly a minute seemed to have elapsed since the black crisis, ere they were bowling along swiftly home, the precious parcel hugged in a close embrace.

And now the farmer came out in quite a new and unexpected light. Never a word did he say of broken fences and hurdles, trampled crops and harried flocks and herds. One would have thought the man had never possessed a head of live stock in his life. Instead, he was deeply interested in the whole delorous quest of the tea-things, and sympathised with Harold on the disputed point in mathematics as if he had been himself at the same stage of education. As they neared home, Harold found himself, to his surprise, sitting up and chatting to his new friend like man to man; and before he was dropped at a convenient gap in the garden hedge, he had promised that when Selina gave her first public tea-party, little Miss Larkin should be invited to come and bring her whole sawdust family along with her, and the farmer

farmer appeared as pleased and proud as if he had been asked to a garden party at Marlborough House. Really those Olympians have certain good points, far down in them. I shall leave off abusing them some day.

At the hour of five, Selina, having spent the afternoon searching for Harold in all his accustomed haunts, sat down disconsolately to tea with her dolls, who ungenerously refused to wait beyond the appointed hour. The wooden tea-things seemed more chipped than usual; and the dolls themselves had more of wax and sawdust, and less of human colour and intelligence about them, than she ever remembered before. It was then that Harold burst in, very dusty, his stockings at his heels, and the channels ploughed by tears still showing on his grimy cheeks; and Selina was at last permitted to know that he had been thinking of her ever since his ill-juded exhibition of temper, and that his sulks had not been the genuine article, nor had he gone frogging by himself. It was a very happy hostess who dispensed hospitality that evening to a glassy-eyed stiff-kneed circle; and many a dollish *gaucherie*, that would have been severely checked on ordinary occasions, was as much overlooked as if it had been a birthday.

But Harold and I, in our stupid masculine way, thought all her happiness sprang from possession of the long-coveted tea-service.

Hor. Car. I. 5
A Modern Paraphrase

By Charles Newton-Robinson

PYRRHA, the wan, the golden-tressed !
For what bright boy are you waiting, dressed
So witchingly, in your simple best ?

Yes, like a witch in her cave, you sit
In the gilded midnight, rosy-lit ;
While snares for souls of men you knit.

The boy shall wonder, the boy shall rue
Like me, that ever he deemed you true.
Mine is another tale of you.

For I have known that sea-calm brow
Dark with treacherous gusts ere now,
And saved myself, I know not how.

Bodley Heads
No. 2 : Mr. John Davidson

By Will Rothenstein

Henri Beyle

By Norman Hapgood

THE fact that none of his work has been translated into English is probably a source of amused satisfaction to many of the lovers of Beyle. Though he exercised a marked influence on Mérimée, was wildly praised by Balzac, was discussed twice by Sainte-Beuve, was pointed to in Maupassant's famous manifesto-preface to *Pierre et Jean*; though he has been twice eulogised by Taine, and once by Bourget; and though he has been carefully analysed by Zola, he is read little in France and scarcely at all elsewhere. While his name, at his death scarcely heard beyond his little circle of men of letters, has become rather prominent, his books are still known to very few. His cool prophecy that a few leading spirits would read him by 1880 was justified, and the solution of his doubt whether he would not by 1930 have sunk again into oblivion seems now at least as likely as it was then to be an affirmative. "To the happy few," he dedicated his latest important novel, and it will be as it has been, for the few, happy in some meanings of that intangible word, that his character and his writings have a serious interest.

In one of the *Edinburgh Review's* essays on Mme. du Deffand is a rather striking passage in which Jeffrey sums up the conditions that made conversation so fascinating in the salons of the France

France of Louis XV. In *Rome, Florence, et Naples*, published shortly afterward by Beyle, under his most familiar psuedonym of Stendhal, is a conversation, with all the marks of a piece of genuine evidence on the English character, between the author and an Englishman; and yet a large part of what is given as the opinion of this acquaintance of Beyle is almost a literal translation of Jeffrey's remarks on the conditions of good conversation. Such a striking phrase as "where all are noble all are free" is taken without change, and the whole is stolen with almost equal thoroughness. This characteristic runs through all of his books. He was not a scholar, so he stole his facts and many of his opinions, with no acknowledgments, and made very pleasing books.

Related, perhaps, to this characteristic, are the inexactness of his facts and the unreliability of his judgments. Berlioz somewhere in his memoirs gives to Stendhal half-a-dozen lines, which run something like this: "There was present also one M. Beyle, a short man with an enormous belly, and an expression which he tries to make benign and succeeds in making malicious. He is the author of a Life of Rossini, full of painful stupidities about music." Painful indeed, to a critic with the enthusiam and the mastery of Berlioz, a lot of emphatic judgments from a man who was ignorant of the technique of music, who took it seriously but lazily, and who could make such a delicious comment at the end of a comparison of skill with inspiration, as, "What would not Beethoven do, if, with his technical knowledge, he had the ideas of Rossini?" Imagine the passionate lover of the noblest in music hearing distinctions drawn between form and idea in music, with condescension for Beethoven, by a man who found in Cimarosa and Rossini his happiness night after night through years. Imagine Beyle talking of grace, sweetness, softness, voluptuousness,

voluptuousness, ease, tune, and Berlioz growing harsh with rage and running away to hide from these effeminate notions in the stern poetry of Beethoven's harmonies. Imagine them crossing over into literature and coming there at the height to the same name, Shakespeare. What different Shakespeares they are. Berlioz, entranced, losing self-control for days, feeling with passion the glowing life of the poets' words, would turn, as from something unclean, from the man whose love for Macbeth showed itself mostly in the citation of passages that give fineness to the feelings which the school of Racine thought unsuited to poetry. "You use it as a thesis," the enthusiast might cry. "The grandeur, the wealth, the terror of it escape you. You see his delicacy, his proportion, a deeper taste than the classic French taste, and it forges you a weapon. But you are not swept on by him, you never get into the torrent of him, you are cool and shallow, and your praise is profanation." Stendhal read Shakespeare with some direct pleasure, no doubt, but he was always on the look-out for quotations to prove some thesis, and he read Scott and Richardson, probably all the books he read in any language, in the same unabandoned restricted way.

In painting it is the same. It is with a narrow and *dilettante* intelligence that he judges pictures. The painter who feeds certain sentiments, he loves and thinks great. Guido Reni is suave; therefore only one or two in the world's history can compare with him. One of them is Correggio, for his true voluptuousness. These are the artists he loves. Others he must praise, as he praised Shakespeare, to support some attack on French canons of art. Therefore is Michelangelo one of the gods. The effort is apparent throughout, and as he recalls the fact that Mme. du Deffand and Voltaire saw in Michelangelo nothing but ugliness, and notes that such is the attitude of all true Frenchmen, the lover

of Beyle smiles at his effort to get far enough away from his own saturated French nature to love the masculine and august painter he is praising. Before the Moses, Mérimée tells us, Beyle could find nothing to say beyond the observation that ferocity could not be better depicted. This vague, untechnical point of view was no subject of regret to Stendhal. He gloried in it. "Foolish as a scholar," he says somewhere, and in another place, "Vinci is a great artist precisely because he is no scholar."

Add to these qualities of lack of truthfulness, lack of thoroughness, and lack of imagination, a total disregard for any moral view of life, in the sense of a believing, strenuous view, and you have, from the negative side, the general aspects of Stendhal's character. He was not vicious—far from it—though he admires many things that are vicious. He is not indecent, for "the greatest enemy of voluptuousness is indecency," and voluptuousness tests all things. The keen Duclos has said that the French are the only people among whom it is possible for the morals to be depraved without either the heart being depraved or the courage being weakened. It would be almost unfair to speak of Beyle's morals as depraved, as even in his earliest childhood he seems to have been without a touch of any moral quality. "Who knows that the world will last a week?" he asks, and the question expresses well the instinct in him that made him deny any appeal but that of his own ends. Both morals and religion really repel him. It is impossible to love a supreme being, he says, though we may perhaps respect him. Indeed, he believes that love and respect never go together, that grace, which he loves, excludes force, which he respects; and thus he loves Reni and respects Michelangelo. Grace and force are the opposite sides of a sphere, and the human eye cannot see both. As for him, he fearlessly takes sympathy and grace and abandons nobility. In the same manner that he excludes strenuous

strenuous feelings of right altogether, he makes painting, which he thinks the nobler art, secondary to music, which is the more comfortable. For a very sensitive man, he goes on, with real coherence to the mind of a Beylian, painting is only a friend, while music is a mistress. Happy indeed he who has both friend and mistress. In some of his moods, the more austere, the nobler and less personal tastes and virtues, interest him, for he is to some extent interested in everything; but except where he is supporting one of his few fundamental theses he does not deceive himself into thinking he likes them, and he never takes with real seriousness anything he does not like. Elevation and ferocity are the two words he uses over and over again in explaining that Michelangelo alone could paint the Bible, and the very poverty of his vocabulary, so discriminating when he is on more congenial subjects, suggests how external was the acquaintance of Beyle with elevation or ferocity, with Michelangelo or the Bible. He has written entertainingly on such subjects, but it all has the sound of guess-work. These two qualities, with which he sums up the sterner aspects of life, are perhaps not altogether separable from a third, dignity, and his view of this last may throw some light on the nature of his relations with the elevation and ferocity he praises. Here is a passage from *Le Rouge et le Noir*: "Mathilde thought she saw happiness. This sight, all-powerful with people who combine courageous souls with superior minds, had to fight long against dignity and all vulgar sentiments of duty." Equally lofty is his tone towards other qualities that are in reality part of the same attitude; a tone less of reproach than of simple contempt. The heroine of *Le Rouge et le Noir* is made to argue that "it is necessary to return in good faith to the vulgar ideas of purity and honour." Two more of the social virtues are disposed of by him in one extract, which, by the way, illustrates also the truly logical and

and the apparently illogical nature of Stendhal's thought. It will take a little reflection to see how he gets so suddenly from industry to patriotism in the following judgment, but the coherence of the thought will be complete to the Beylian: "It is rare that a young Neapolitan of fourteen is forced to do anything disagreeable. All his life he prefers the pain of want to the pain of work. The fools from the North treat as barbarians the citizens of this country, because they are not unhappy at wearing a shabby coat. Nothing would seem more laughable to an inhabitant of Crotona than to suggest his fighting to get a red ribbon in his button-hole, or to have a sovereign named Ferdinand or William. The sentiment of loyalty, or devotion to dynasty, which shines in the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and which should have made him a peer, is as unknown here as snow in May. To tell the truth, I don't see that this proves these people fools. (I admit that this idea is in very bad taste.)" For himself he hated his country, as he curtly puts it, and loved none of his relatives. Patriotism, for which his contempt is perhaps mixed with real hatred, is in his mind allied to the most of all stupid tyrants, propriety, or, as he more often calls it, opinion, his most violent aversion. Napoleon, he thinks, in destroying the custom of *cavaliere serviente* simply added to the world's mass of *ennui* by ushering into Italy the flat religion of propriety. He is full of such lucid observations as that the trouble with opinion is that it takes a hand in private matters, whence comes the sadness of England and America. To this sadness of the moral countries and the moral people he never tires of referring. His thesis carries him so far that he bunches together Veronese and Tintoretto under the phrase, "painters without ideal," in whom there is something dry, narrow, reasonable, bound by propriety; in a word, incapable of rapture. This referring to some general standard, this lack of directness, of fervour, of abandonment, is illustrated

illustrated by the Englishman's praise of his mistress, that there was nothing vulgar in her. It would take, Beyle says, eight days to explain that to a Milanese, and then he would have a fit of laughter.

These few references illustrate fairly the instincts and beliefs that are the basis of Stendhal's whole thought and life. The absolute degree of moral scepticism that is needed to make a sympathetic reader of him is—especially among people refined and cultivated enough to care for his subjects—everywhere rare. I call it a moral rather than an intellectual scepticism, because while he would doubtless deny the possibility of knowing the best good of the greatest number, a more ultimate truth is that he is perfectly indifferent to the good of the greatest number. It is unabashed egotism. The assertion of his individual will, absolute loyalty to his private tastes, is his principle of thought and action, and his will and his tastes do not include the rest of the world, and its desires. "What is the ME? I know nothing about it. One day I awoke upon this earth, I found myself united to a certain body, a certain fortune. Shall I go into the vain amusement of wishing to change them, and in the meantime forget to live? That is to be a dupe; I submit to their failings. I submit to my aristocratic bent, after having declaimed for ten years, in good faith, against all aristocracy. I adore Roman noses, and yet, if I am a Frenchman, I resign myself to having received from heaven only a Champagne nose: what can I do about it? The Romans were a great evil for humanity, a deadly disease which retarded the civilisation of the world . . . . In spite of so many wrongs, my heart is for the Romans." Thus, in all the details of his extended comparison, Beyle tries to state with fairness the two sides, the general good and the personal, the need of obedience to its rules if some general ends of society are to be attained,

attained, and the individual's loss from obedience. He states with fairness, but his own choice is never in doubt. He goes to what directly pleases him. "Shall I dare to talk of the bases of morals? From the accounts of my comrades I believe that there are as many deceived husbands at Paris as at Boulogne, at Berlin as at Rome. The whole difference is that at Paris the sin is caused by vanity, and at Rome by climate. The only exception I find is in the middle classes in England, and all classes at Geneva. But, upon my honour, the drawback in *ennui* is too great. I prefer Paris. It is gay." His tastes, his sympathies, are unhesitatingly with the Roman in the following judgment: "A Roman to whom you should propose to love always the same woman, were she an angel, would exclaim that you were taking from him three-quarters of what makes life worth while. Thus, at Edinburgh, the family is first, and at Rome it is a detail. If the system of the Northern people sometimes begets the monotony and the *ennui* that we read on their faces, it often causes a calm and continuous happiness." This steady contrast is noted by his mind merely, his logical fairness. His mind is judicial in a sort of negative, formal sense; judicial without weight, we might almost say. He does not feel, or see imaginatively, sympathetically, the advantages of habitual constancy. He feels only the truths of the other side, or the side of truth which he expresses when he says that all true passion is selfish: and passion and its truth are the final test for him. This selfishness, which is even more self-reliance than it is self-seeking, which has his instinctive approval in all moods, is directly celebrated by him in most. The more natural genius and originality one has, he says, the more one feels the profound truth of the remark of the Duchesse de Ferté, that she found no one but herself who was always right. And not only does natural genius, which we might

might sum up as honesty to one's instincts, or originality, make us contemptuous of all judgments but our own; it leads us (so far does Beyle go) to esteem only ourselves. Reason, he argues, or rather states, makes us see, and prevents our acting, since nothing is worth the effort it costs. Laziness forces us to prefer ourselves, and in others it is only ourselves that we esteem.

With this principle as his broadest generalisation it is not unnatural that his profoundest admiration was for Napoleon. I am a man, he says in substance, who has loved a few painters, a few people, and respected one man—Napoleon. He respected a man who knew what he wanted, wanted it constantly, and pursued it fearlessly, without scruples and with intelligence, with constant calculation, with lies, with hypocrisy, with cruelty. Beyle used to lie with remarkable ease even in his youth. He makes his almost autobiographical hero, Julien Sorel, a liar throughout and a hypocrite on the very day of his execution. Beyle lays down the judgments about Napoleon, that he liked argument, because he was strong in it, and that he kept his peace, like a savage, whenever there was any possibility of his being seen to be inferior to any one else in grasp of the topic under discussion. It is in his Life of Napoleon that Beyle dwells as persistently as anywhere on his never-ceasing principle: examine yourself; get at your most spontaneous, indubitable tastes, desires, ambitions; follow them; act from them unceasingly; be turned aside by nothing.

It is possible, in going through Beyle's works for that purpose, to find a remark here and there that might possibly indicate a basis of faith under this insistence, a belief that in the end a thorough independence of aim in each individual would be for the good of all; but these passing words really do not go against the truth of the statement that Beyle was absolutely without the moral attitude; that the pleasing to himself immediately was all he gave interest

interest to, and that of the intellectual qualities those that had beauty for him were the crueller ones—force, concentration, sagacity, in the service of egotism. But here are a few of the possible exceptions. "Molière," he says, in a dispute about that writer's morality, "painted with more depth than the other poets. Therefore, he is more moral. Nothing could be more simple." With this epigram he leaves the subject; but it is tolerably clear that he means to deny any other moral than truth, not to say that the truth is an inevitable servant of good. If it did mean the latter, it was thrown off at the moment as an easy argument, for his belief is pronounced through his works, that his loves are the world's banes, and that any interest in the world's good, in the moral law, is bourgeois and dull. Here is another phrase that perhaps might suggest that the generalisation was unsafe: "He is the greatest man in Europe because he is the only honest man." This, like the other, is clear enough to a reader of him; and it is really impossible to find in him any identification of the interesting, the worthy, with the permanently and generally serviceable. Where the social point of view is taken for a moment it is by grace of logic purely, for a formal fairness. A more unmitigated moral rebel, a more absolute sceptic, a more thoroughly isolated individual than the author of *Le Rouge et le Noir* could not exist. Nor could a more unhesitating dogmatist exist, despite his sneering apolgies, for dogmatism is as natural an expression of absolute scepticism as it is of absolute faith. When a man refuses to say anything further than, "This is true for me, at this moment," or perhaps, "This is true of a man exactly such as I describe, in exactly these circumstances," he is likely to make these statements with unshakable firmness. This distinctness and coherence of the mind, which is entirely devoted to relativity, is one of the charms of Stendhal for his lovers. It makes possible the completeness and the

the originality or a perfect individual, of an entirely unrestrained growth. It is the kind of character that we call capricious or fantastic when it is weak, but when it is strong it has a value for us through its emphasis of interesting principles which we do not find so visible and disentangled in more conforming people. The instincts which in Stendhal have such a free field to expatiate seem to some readers rare and distinguished, and to these readers it is a delight to see them set in such high relief. This, in its most general aspect, is what gave him his short-lived glory among the young writers of France. They hailed him as the discoverer of the doctrine of relativity, or as the first who applied it to the particular facts they wished to emphasise—the environment and its influence on the individual. This has been overworked by great men and little men until we grow sad at the sound of the word; but it was not so in Beyle's time, and he used the principle with moderation, seldom or never forgetting the incalculable and inexplicable accidents of individual variations. He does not forget either that individuals make the environment, and he is really clearer than his successors in treating race-traits, the climate and the local causes, individual training, and individual idiosyncrasies, as a great mixed whole, in which the safest course is to stick pretty closely to the study of the completed product. For this reason Zola very properly removed him from the pedestal on which Taine had put him, for what is a solvent of all problems to the school for which Taine hoped to be the prophet is in Stendhal but one principle, in its place on an equality with others. Zola's analysis of this side of Beyle is really masterly; and he proves without difficulty that the only connection between Beyle and the present naturalists is one of creed, not of execution—that Beyle did not apply the principle he believed in. The setting of his scenes is not distinct. Sometimes it is not even sketched in; and here Zola

Zola draws an illustration from a strong scene in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, and shows how different the setting would have been in his own hands. Beyle is a logician, abstract; Zola thinks himself concrete, and concrete he is—often by main force. This is a sad failure to apply the doctrine of relativity to oneself. Beyle errs sometimes in the same way, and some of his attempts at local colour are very tiresome, but on the whole he remains frankly the analyser, the introspective psycologist, the man of distinct but disembodied ideas. He recognised the environment as he recognised other things in his fertile reflections, but he was as a rule too faithful to his own principles to spend much time in trying to reproduce it in details which did not directly interest him. It was therefore natural that his celebration by the extremists should be short-lived. Most of them do him what justice they can with effort, like Zola, or pass him over with some such word as the "dry" of Goncourt. His fads were his own. None of them have yet become the fads of a school, though some principles that were restrained with him have become battle-cries in later times. His real fads are hardly fitted to be banners, for they are too specific. In very general theories he generally kept rather sane. His real difference from the school that claimed him for a father half a century after his death, is well suggested in the awkward word that Zola is fond of throwing at him, "ideologist." The idea, the abstract truth and the intellectual form of it, its clearness, its stateableness, its cogency and consistency, is the final interest with him. The outer world is only the material for the expression of ideas, only the illustrations of them, and the ideas are therefore not pictorial or dramatic, but logical. The arts are ultimately the expression of thought and feeling, and colour and plastic form are means only. You never find him complaining, as his friend Mérimée did, that the meaning of the plastic arts cannot

cannot be given in words because for a slight difference in shade or in curve there is no expression in language. All that Beyle got out of art he could put into words. He made no attempt to compete with the painter like the leading realists of the past half-century. Other arts interested him only as far as they formed, without straining, illustrations for expression in language of the feelings they appeal to. It was with him in music as it was in painting, and often his musical criticism is as charming to the unattached *dilettante* as it is annoying to the technical critic who judges it in its own forms. Beyle names the sensation with precision always. His vocabulary has fine shades without weakening fluency. In choosing single words to name single sensations is his greatest power, and it is a power which naturally belongs to a man whose eye is inward, a power which the word-painters of the environment lack. Everything is expression for Beyle, and within the limits of the verbally-expressible he steadfastly remains. His truth is truth to the forms of thought as they exist in the reason—the clear eighteenth-century reason—disembodied truth. "It is necessary to have bones and blood in the human machine to make it walk. But we give slight attention to these necessary conditions of life, to fly to its great end, its final result—to think and to feel.

"That is the history or drawing, of colour, of light and shade, of all the various parts of painting, compared to expression.

"Expression is the whole of art."

This reminds one again of Mérimée's statement, that Beyle could see in the Moses nothing but the expression of ferocity; and an equally conclusive assertion (for it is in him no confession) is made by Beyle in reference to music, which he says is excellent if it gives him elevated thoughts on the subjects that are occupying him, and if it makes him think of the music itself it is mediocre. Thus

Thus Beyle is as far from being an artist as possible. He cares for the forms of the outer world, he spends his life in looking at beauty and listening to it, but only because he knows that that is the way to call up in himself the ideas, the sensations, the emotions that he loves almost with voluptuousness. The basis of genius, he says, in speaking of Michelangelo, is logic, and if this is true—as in the sense in which he used it, it probably is—Beyle's genius was mostly basis.

Mérimée says that though Beyle was constantly appealing to logic, he reached his conclusions not by his reason but by his imagination. This is certainly making a false distinction. Beyle was not a logician in the sense that he got at conclusions indirectly by syllogisms. He did not forget his premisses in the interest of the inductive process. What he calls logic is an attitude or quality of the mind, and means really abstract coherence. Of what he himself calls ideology, with as much contempt as Zola could put into the word, he says that it is a science not only tiresome but impertinent. He means any constructive, deductive system of thought. He studied Kant and other German metaphysicians, and thought them shallow—superior men ingeniously building houses of cards. His feet seldom if ever got off the solid ground of observations into the region of formal, logical deduction. "Facts! facts!" he cried, and his love of facts at first hand, keeps him from some of the defects of the abstract mind. Every statement is independent of the preceding and the succeeding ones, each is examined by itself, each illustrated by anecdote, inexact enough, to be sure, but clear. There is no haze in his thought. When Mérimée says that it is Beyle's imagination and not his logic that decides, he is right, in the sense that Beyle has no middle terms, that his vision is direct, that the *a priori* process is secondary and merely suggestive with him. "What should we logically

logically expect to find the case here?" he will ask before a new set of facts, but if his expectation and his observation differ, he readjusts his principles. It is no paradox to call a mind both abstract and empirical, introspective and scientific; and Beyle's was both.

This quality of logic without constructiveness shows, of course, in his style. There is lucidity of transition, of connection, of relation, among the details, but the parts are not put together to form an artistic whole. They fall on to the paper from his mind direct, and the completed book has no other unity than has the mind of the author. As he was a strong admirer of Bacon and his methods, it is safe enough to say that he would have accepted entirely this statement about composition as his own creed: "Thirdly, whereas I could have digested these rules into a certain method or order, which, I know, would have been more admired, as that which would have made every particular rule, through its coherence and relation unto other rules, seem more cunning and more deep; yet I have avoided so to do, because this delivering of knowledge in distinct and disjoined aphorisms doth leave the wit of man more free to turn and toss, and to make use of that which is so delivered to more several purposes and applications." He is the typical suggestive critic, formless, uncreative, general and specific, precise and abstract: chaotic to the artist, satisfactory to the psychologist. It makes no difference where the story begins, whether this sentence follows that, or where the chapter ends. There are no rules of time and place. His style is a series of epigrams, and the order of their presentation is almost accidental. "To draw out a plot freezes me," he says, and one could guess it from his stories, which are in all essentials like his essays. To this analytic, unplastic mind the plot, the characters, are but illustrations of the general truths. The characters he draws have separate

separate individual life only so far as they are copies. There is no invention, no construction, no creation. Moreover there is no style, or no other quality of style than lucidity. He not only lacks other qualities, he despises them. The "neatly turned" style and the rhetorical alike have his contempt. Most rhetoricians are "emphatic, eloquent, and declamatory." He almost had a duel about Chateaubriand's "cime indéterminée des forêts." Rousseau is particularly irritating to him. "Only a great soul knows how to write simply, and that is why Rousseau has put so much rhetoric into the *New Eloïse*, which makes it unreadable after thirty years." In another place he says he detests, in the arrangement of words, tragic combinations, which are intended to give majesty to the style. He sees only absurdity in them. His style fits his thought, and his failure to comprehend colour in style is not surprising in a man whose thought has no setting, in a man who remarks with scorn that it is easier to describe clothing than it is to describe movements of the soul. He cares only for movements of the soul. The sense of form might have given his work a larger life, but it is part of his rare value for a few that he talks in bald statements, single-word suggestions, disconnected flashes. This intellectual impressionism, as it were, is more stimulating to them than any work of art. These are not poetic souls, it is needless to say, however much they may love poetry. Beyle is the essence of prose and it is his strength. He loved poetry, but he got from it only the prose, so much of the idea as is independent of the form. Mérimée tells us that Beyle murdered verse in reading aloud, and in his treatise *De l'Amour* he informs us that verse was invented to help the memory and to retain it in dramatic art is a remnant of barbarity. The elevation, the *abandon*, the passion of poetry—all but the psychology—were foreign to this mind, whose unimaginative prose is its distinction.

Perhaps

Perhaps this limitation is kin to another: that as novelist Beyle painted with success only himself. Much the solidest of his characters is Julien Sorel, a copy trait for trait of the author, reduced, so to speak, to his essential elements. Both Julien and Beyle were men of restless ambition, clear, colourless minds, and constant activity. Julien turned this activity to one thing, the study of the art of dominating women, and Beyle to three, of which this was the principal, and the other two were the comprehension of art principles and the expression of them. In his earlier days he had followed the army of Napoleon, until he became disgusted with the grossness of the life he saw. What renown he won in the army was for making his toilet with complete care on the eve of battle. From the Moscow army he wrote to one of his friends that everything was lacking which he needed, "friendship, love (or the semblance of it), and the arts." For simplicity, friendship may be left out in summing up Beyle's interests, for while his friendships were genuine they did not interest him much, except as an opportunity to work up his ideas. Of the two interests that remain, the one expressed in Julien, the psychology of love, illustrated by practice, is much the more essential. Julien too had Napoleon for an ideal, and when he found he could not imitate him in the letter he resigned himself to making in his spirit the conquests that were open to him. The genius that Napoleon put into political relations he would put into social ones. All the principles of war should live again in his intrigues with women.

This spirit is well enough known in its outlines. Perhaps the most perfect sketch of it in its unmixed form is in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, a book which Beyle knew and must have loved. He must have admired and envied the Comte de Valmont and the Marquise de Merteuil. There is here none of the grossness of the

Restoration

Restoration comedy in England. It is the art of satisfying vanity in a particular way, in its most delicate form. It is an occupation and an art as imperative, one might almost say as impersonal, were not the paradox so violent, as any other. What makes Stendhal's account of this art differ from that of Delaclos and the other masters is the fact that, deeply as he is in it, he is half outside of it: he is the psychologist every moment, seeing his own attitude as coldly as he sees the facts on which he is forming his campaign. Read the scene, for instance, where Julien first takes the hand of the object of his designs, absolutely as a matter of duty, a disagreeable move necessary to the success of the game. The cold, forced spirit of so much of intrigue is clearly seen by Beyle and accepted by him as a necessity. He used to tell young men that if they were alone in a room five minutes with a beautiful woman without declaring they loved her, it proved them poltroons. Two sides of him, however, are always present; for this is the same man who repeats for ever in his book the cry that there is no love in France. He means that this science, better than no love at all, is inferior to the *abandon* of the Italians. The love of 1770, for which he often longs, with its gaiety, its tact, its discretion, "with the thousand qualities of *savoir-vivre*," is after all only second. *Amour-gout*, to point out the distinction in two famous phrases of his own, is for ever inferior to *amour-passion*. Stendhal, admiring the latter, must have been confined to the former, though not in its baldest form, for to some of the skill and irony of Valmont he added the softness, the sensibility, of a later generation, and he added also the will to feel, so that his study of feeling and his practice of it grew more successful together. Psychology and sensibility are mutual aids in him, as they not infrequently are in "observers of the human heart," to quote his description of his profession. "What consideration

consideration can take precedence, in a sombre heart, of the never-flagging charm of being loved by a woman who is happy and gay?" The voluptuary almost succeeds in looking as genuine as the psychologist. "This nervous fluid, so to speak, has each day but a certain amount of sensitiveness to expend. If you put it into the enjoyment of thirty beautiful pictures you shall not use it to mourn the death of an adored mistress." You cannot disentangle them. Love, voluptuousness, art, psychology, sincerity, effort, all are mixed up together, whatever the ostensible subject. It is a truly French compound, perhaps made none the less essentially French by the author's constant berating of his country for its consciousness and vanity: a man who would be uneasy if he were not exercising his fascinating powers on some woman, and a man whose tears were ready; a man who could not live without action, soaking in the *dolce far niente*; a man all intelligence, and by very force of intelligence a man of emotion. He would be miserable if he gave himself up to either side. "In the things of sentiment perhaps the most delicate judges are found at Paris—but there is always a little chill." He goes to Italy, and as he voluptuously feels the warm air and sees the warm blood and the free movements, the simplicity of heedlessness and passion, his mind goes back longingly to the other things. "All is decadence here, all in memory. Active life is in London and in Paris. The days when I am all sympathy I prefer Rome: but staying here tends to weaken the mind, to plunge it into stupor. There is no effort, no energy, nothing moves fast. Upon my word, I prefer the active life of the North and the bad taste of our barracks." But among these conflicting ideals it is possible perhaps to pick the strongest, and I think it is painted in this picture: "A delicious salon, within ten steps of the sea, from which we are separated by a grove of orange-trees. The sea breaks

breaks gently, Ischia is in sight. The ices are excellent." The last touch seems to me deliciously characteristic. What is more subtle to a man whose whole life is an experiment in taste, what more suggestive, what more typical, than an ice? There is a pervading delight in it, in the unsubstantiality, the provokingness, the refinement of it. "In the boxes, toward the middle of the evening, the *cavaliere servante* of the lady usually orders some ices. There is always some wager, and the ordinary bets are sherbets, which are divine. There are three kinds, *gelati*, *crepè* and *pezzidiere*. It is an excellent thing to become familiar with. I have not yet determined the best kind, and I experiment every evening." Do not mistake this for playfulness. The man who cannot take an ice seriously cannot take Stendhal sympathetically.

Such, in the rough, is the point of view of this critic of character and of art. Of course the value of judgments from such a man in such an attitude is dependent entirely on what one seeks from criticism. Here is what Stendhal hopes to give: "My end is to make each observer question his own soul, disentangle his own manner of feeling, and thus succeed in forming a judgment for himself, a way of seeing formed in accord with his own character, his tastes, his ruling passions, if indeed he have passions, for unhappily they are necessary to judge the arts." The word "passion," here as elsewhere, is not to be given too violent a meaning. "Emotion" would do as well—sincere personal feeling. That there is no end of art except to bring out this sincere individual feeling is his ultimate belief. He is fond of the story of the young girl who asked Voltaire to hear her recite, so as to judge of her fitness for the stage. Astonished at her coldness, Voltaire said: "But, mademoiselle, if you yourself had a lover who abandoned you, what would you do?" "I would take another," she answered. That, Stendhal adds, is the correct point of

of view for nineteen-twentieths of life, but not for art. "I care only for genius, for young painters with fire in the soul and open intelligence." For disinterested, cool taste, for objective justness and precision, he has only contempt. Indeed, he accepts Goethe's definition of taste as the art of properly tying one's cravats in things of the mind. Everything that is not special to the speaker, personal, he identifies with thinness, insincerity, pose. "The best thing one can bring before works of art, is a natural mind. One must dare to feel what he does feel." To one's self, the first of rules, means to follow one's primitive sentiments. "Instead of wishing to judge according to literary principles, and defend correct doctrines, why do not our youths content themselves with the fairest privilege of their age, to have sentiments?" There is no division into impersonal judgment and private sentiment. The only criticism that has value is private, personal, intimate.

Less special to Stendhal now, though rare at the time in which he lived, is the appeal to life as the basis of art. "To find the Greeks, look in the forests of America." Go to the swimming-school or the ballet to realise the correctness and the energy of Michelangelo. Familiarity is everything. "The work of genius is the sense of conversation," and as "the man who takes the word of another is a cruel bore in a salon," so is he as a critic. "What is the antique bas-relief to me? Let us try to make good modern painting. The Greeks loved the nude. We never see it, and moreover it repels us." This conclusion shows the weakness, or the limitation, of this kind of criticism, which as Stendhal applies it would keep us from all we have learned from the revived study of the nude, because the first impression to one unused to seeing it is not an artistic one. But the limitations of Stendhal and his world are obvious enough. It is his eloquence and usefulness within his limits that are worth examination.

"Beauty,"

"Beauty," to Stendhal, "is simply a promise of happiness," and the phrase sums up his attitude. Here is his ideal way of taking music. He asked a question of a young woman about somebody in the audience. The young woman usually says nothing during the evening. To his question she answered, "Music pleases when it puts your soul in the evening in the same position that love put it in during the day."

Beyle adds: "Such is the simplicity of language and of action. I did not answer, and I left her. When one feels music in such a way, what friend is not importunate?" When he leaves this field for technical judgments he is laughable to any one who does not care for the texture of his mind, whatever his expression; for music to him is really only a background for his sensibility. "How can I talk of music without giving the history of my sensations?" This is, doubtless, maudlin to the sturdy masculine mind, this religion of sensibility, this fondling of one's sentimental susceptibilities, and it certainly has no grandeur and no morality. "Sensibility," Coleridge says, that is, a constitutional quickness of sympathy with pain and pleasure, and a keen sense of the gratifications that accompany social intercourse, mutual endearments, and reciprocal preferences . . . . sensibility is not even a sure pledge of a good heart, though among the most common meanings of that many-meaning and too commonly misapplied expression." It leads, he goes on, to effeminate sensitiveness by making us alive to trifling misfortunes. This is just, with all its severity, and the lover of Stendhal has only to smile, and quote Rousseau, with Beyle himself: "I must admit that I am a great booby; for I get all my pleasure in being sad."

Naturally enough, ennui plays a great part in such a nature, thin, intelligent, sensitive, immoral, self-indulgent. It lies behind his art of love and his love of art. "Ennui, this great motive power

power of intelligent people," he says; and again: "I was much surprised when, studying painting out of pure ennui, I found it a balm for cruel sorrows." He really loves it. "Ennui! the god whom I implore, the powerful god who reigns in the hall of the *Français*, the only power in the world that can cause the Laharpes to be thrown into the fire." Hence his love for Madame du Deffand, the great expert in ennui, and for the whole century of ennui, wit and immorality. Certainly the lack of all fire and enthusiasm, the lack of faith, of hope, of charity, does go often with a clear, sharp, negative freshness of judgment, which is often seen in the colder, finer, smaller workmen in the psychology of social relations. It is a great exposer of pretence. It enabled Stendhal to see that most honest Northerners say in their hearts before the statues of Michelangelo, "Is that all?" as they say before their accomplished ideal, "Good Lord! to be happy, to be loved, is it only this?"

But just as Stendhal keeps in the borderland between vice and virtue, shrinking from grossness, and laughing at morality, so he cannot really cross into the deepest unhappiness any more than he could into passionate happiness. Tragedy repelled him. "The fine arts ought never to try to paint the inevitable ills of humanity. They only increase them, which is a sad success . . . . Noble and almost consoled grief is the only kind that art should seek to produce." To these half-tones his range is limited through the whole of his being. Of his taste in architecture, of which he was technically as ignorant as he was of music, Mérimée tells us that he disliked Gothic, thinking it ugly and sad, and liked the architecture of the Renaissance for its elegance and coquetry; that it was always graceful details, moreover, and not the general plan that attracted him; which is a limitation that naturally goes with the other.

Of

Of course the charm and the limitations that are everywhere in Beyle's art criticism are the same in his judgments of national traits, which form a large part or his work. Antipathy to the French is one of his fixed ideas, thorough Frenchman that he was; for his own vanity and distrust did not make him hate the less genuinely those weaknesses. Vanity is bourgeois, he thinks, and there is for him no more terrible word. It spoils the best things, too—conversation among others; for the French conversation is work. "The most tiresome defect in our present civilisation is the desire to produce effect." So with their bravery, their love, all is calculated, there is no abandonment. This annoys him particularly in the women, who are always the most important element to him. He gives them their due, but coldly: "France, however, is always the country where there are always the most passable women. They seduce by delicate pleasures made possible by their mode of dress, and these pleasures can be appreciated by the most passionless natures. Dry natures are afraid of Italian beauty." Of course this continual flinging at the French is only partly vanity, self-glorification in being able, almost alone of foreigners, to appreciate the Italians. It is partly contempt for his leading power, for mere intelligence. In his youth he spoke with half-regret of his being so reasonable that he would go to bed to save his health even when his head was crowded with ideas that he wanted to write. It was his desperate desire to be as Italian as he could, rather than any serene belief that he had thrown off much of his French nature, that made him leave orders to be inscribed on his tombstone:

Qui Giace
Arrigo Beyle Milanese
Visse, scrisse, amò.

It

It comes dangerously near to a pose, perhaps, and yet there is genuineness enough in it to make it pathetic. He praises the Italians because they do not judge their happiness. He never ceased to judge his. Nowhere outside of Italy, he thinks, can one hear with a certain accent, "O Dio! com' e bello!" But the implication is quite unfair. I have heard a common French-woman exclaim, under her breath, before an ugly peacock, "Dieu! comme c'est beau," with an intensity that was not less because it was restrained. But restraint was Beyle's bugbear. From his own economical, calculating nature he flew almost with worship to its opposite. He is speaking of Julien, and therefore of himself, when he says, in *Le Rouge et le Noir*: "Intellectual love has doubtless more cleverness than true love, but it has only moments of enthusiasm. It knows itselr too well. It judges itself unceasingly. Far from driving away thought, it exists only by force of thought." He calls Julien mediocre, and he says of him: "This dry soul felt all of passion that is possible in a person raised in the midst of this excessive civilisation which Paris admires." Beyle saves Julien from contempt at the end (and doubtless he consoled himself with something similar) by causing him, while remaining a conscious hypocrite, to lose his life unhesitatingly, absurdly, perversely, for the sake of love. Once he has shown himself capable of the divine unreason, or exaltation, he is respectable. Where the enthusiasm is he is blinded; he cannot see the crudity and stupidity of passion. Before this mad enthusiasm the French fineness and proportion is insignificant. He loses his memory of the charm he has told so well. "Elsewhere there is no conception of this art of giving birth to the laugh of the mind, and of giving delicious joys by unexpected words."

As might be expected, Beyle is even more unfair to the Germans

Germans than he is to his countrymen; for the sentiment, of which he is the epicure and the apologist has nothing in common with the reverent and poetic sentiment in which the Germans are so rich. This last Beyle hates as he hates Rousseau and Madame de Staël. It is phrase, moonshine, and the fact that it is bound up in a stable and orderly character but makes it the more irritating. They are sentimental, innocent, and unintelligent, he says, and he quotes with a sneer, as true of the race: "A soul honest, sweet, and peaceful, free of pride and remorse, full of benevolence and humanity, above the nerves and the passions." In short, quite anti-Beylian, quite submissive, sweet, and moral. For England he has much more respect and even a slight affection. He likes their anti-classicism, and he likes especially the beauty of their women, which he thinks second only to that of the Italians. The rich complexions, the free, open countenances, the strong forms rouse him sometimes almost to enthusiasm; but of course it is all secondary in the inevitable comparison. "English beauty seems paltry, without soul, without life, before the divine eyes which heaven has given to Italy." The somewhat in the submissive faces of the Englishwomen that threatens future ennui, Stendhal thinks has been ingrained there by the workings of the terrible law of propriety which rules as a despot over the unfortunate island. It is the vision of caprice in the face of the Italian woman that makes him certain of never being bored.

It is not surprising that women should be the objects through which Beyle sees everything. A man who sees in relativity, arbitrariness, caprice, the final law of nature, and who feels a sympathy with this law, not unnaturally finds in the absolute, personal, perverse nature of women his most congenial companionship. He finds in women something more elemental than reasonableness. He finds the basal instincts. They best illustrate his psychology of

of final absolute choice. Of course there is the other side too, the epicure's point of view, from which their charm is the centre of the paradise of leisure, music, and ices. His hyperbole in praising art is "equal to the first handshake of the woman one loves." In politics he sees largely the relations of sex; and in national character it is almost always of the women he is talking. Their influence marks the advance of civilisation. "Tenderness has made progress among us because society has become more perfect," and tenderness here is this soft or, if you choose, effeminate, sensibility. "The admission of women to perfect equality would be the surest sign of civilisation. It would double the intellectual forces of the human race and its probabilities of happiness. . . . . To attain equality, the source of happiness for both sexes, the duel would have to be open to women; the pistol demands only address. Any woman, by subjecting herself to imprisonment for two years would be able, at the expiration of the term, to get a divorce. Towards the year Two Thousand these ideas will be no longer ridiculous."

In this passage is the whole man, intelligent and fantastic, sincere and suspicious, fresh, convincing, absurd. He is rapidly settling back into obscurity, to which he is condemned as much by the substance of his thought as by the formlessness of its expression. Entirely a rebel, and only slightly a revolutionist, he is treated by the world as he treated it. A lover of many interesting things inextricably wound up together, his earnest talk about them will perhaps for some time longer be an important influence on the lives of a few whose minds shall be of the kind to which a sharp, industrious, capricious, and rebellious individual is the best stimulant to their own thought.

Day and Night

By E. Nesbit

All day the glorious Sun caressed
  Wide meadows and white winding way,
And on the Earth's soft heaving breast
  Heart-warm his royal kisses lay.
She looked up in his face and smiled,
  With mists of love her face seemed dim;
The golden Emperor was beguiled,
  To dream she would be true to him.

Yet was there, 'neath his golden shower,
  No end of love for him astir;
She waited, dreaming, for the hour
  When Night, her love, should come to her;
When 'neath Night's mantle she should creep
  And feel his arms about her cling,
When the soft tears true lovers weep
  Should make amends for everything.

Plein Air

By Miss Sumner

A Thief in the Night

By Marion Hepworth Dixon

She had watched the huge rectangular shadow of the water-jug on the ceiling for over an hour and three-quarters, and still the nightlight on the washstand burnt uneasily on to the accompaniment of her husband's heavy breathing. The room had loomed black and foreboding on blowing out the candle an hour or two ago, but now the four white walls, hung here and there with faded family photographs, grew strangely luminous as her eyes grew accustomed to the semi-darkness. Yet shifting from left to right, and again from right to left on the tepid pillows, the outlines of the unfamiliar room gained no sort of familiarity as the hours wore on, but remained as blank and unmeaning as the house of death itself.

The silence alone was terrible, speaking as it did of the austere silence of the death-chamber below—a chamber where a white figure, once her husband's brother, lay stretched in awful rigidity on the bed.

The October night was dank, the atmosphere numb and heavy. As the roar of London died in the larger and enwrapping silences, the crack of a piece of furniture or the tapping of a withered leaf on the window-pane grew to be signs portentous and uncanny.

Yet, turning and twisting on the rumpled sheet, every moment sleep

sleep seemed more impossible. In the stagnant air her head felt hot, her limbs feverish. She longed to jun p out of bed and throw open the window, and made as if to do so, but hesitated, fearing the sound might waken the sleeping man beside her. But the thought of movement made her restless, and, slipping cautiously out on to her feet, she took her watch from the little table beside her and peered at it until she made out that the hands indicated five-and-twenty minutes to three.

Nearing the light, she revealed herself a lean, spare woman, with the leathery skin of the lean, and with hair now touched with grey, which grew sparsely and with no attempt at flourish or ornament, on the nape of an anxious neck. For the rest, a woman agitated and agitating, a woman worn with the fret of a single idea.

Five-and-twenty minutes to three! A clock downstairs somewhere in the great silent house struck the half-hour, and Mrs. Rathbourne, with one of those parentheses of the mind which occur in nervous crises, found herself wondering if her watch had gained since she set it right by the station clock at Sheffield. The journey South since they had received that startling telegram summoning them to town had seemed, indeed, a vague blur, varied only by the remembrance of fields splashed with yellow advertisements of divers infallible cures, of a quarrel between her husband and a porter about a bag, and later by the din and roar of the crowded streets and the flare of dingy lights which danced by in procession as the hansom dashed through London from King's Cross.

They had been too late. Too late! After four and a half hours' incessant prayer to Providence—a Providence of whom she had asked and expected so few boons of late—that she should be permitted to be in time. They were too late! Had not the thud, thud, thud of the train said the ugly words in that dreary journey past flying factory-chimneys, scudding hedges, and vanishing jerry-built suburbs?

suburbs? Too late! The blank face of the London house, the scrupulously-drawn blinds, advertised the fact even before she jumped from the cab, smudging her dress on the muddy wheel in her anxiety to gain the door. They were too late, irretrievably too late, she knew, a few minutes later, when the young wife, rising from an armchair in the dimly-lighted dining-room, greeted them in her usual smooth, suave, unemotional tones. She remembered the commonplaces that followed like things heard in a dream. Her husband's dreary inquiries, the young widow's explanations of how Colonel Rathbourne had rallied, and had actually died sitting in his chair in a dressing-gown, and how thoughtful he had been in alluding, some quarter of an hour before his death, to an alteration he had made in his will. The words reached her, but conveyed little meaning to her dazed perceptions. The very sound of the two voices seemed to come as from a distance, as the sound of other voices had once done, when she lay ill as a little child. A bewildered sense of the unreality of things substantial rocked in her brain. A great gap, a vague but impassable gulf lay surely between her and these living, breathing people, so concerned with the material trivialities of life. It was this something dual in her consciousness which made her wonder, half-an-hour later, if in very truth it were she, or some other woman, who mechanically followed her sister-in-law upstairs to the dead man's bedside. If it were she who recoiled so suddenly and with so agonised a cry at the sight of that shrouded form? She felt certain of nothing, except that she hated this wife of six months' standing, with her assured voice, her handsome shoulders, and her manœuvred waist. For six whole months she had been his wife. . . . .

Mrs. Rathbourne shivered, the square wrists shook with such violence that the watch she held nearly slipped from her fingers.

To

To avoid the possibility of noise she placed it on the washstand, and, as she approached the light, her eye was caught by the faded photograph which hung directly above on the wall.

It was of Colonel Rathbourne, the dead man below-stairs. Outwardly the portrait was a thing of little beauty. A mere drabbish presentment of a young man, dressed in the fashion of the sixties, with somewhat sloping shoulders, and whiskers of extravagant shape. Not that Mrs. Rathbourne saw either the whiskers or the shoulders. Long familiarity with such accessories made them part of the inevitable, part of all fixed and determined concrete things, part, indeed, of the felicitous "had been" of her youth. Had she thought of them at all, she would have thought of them as beautiful, as everything connected with the dead man had always seemed, then, thirty years ago, in the rare intervals he had been at home on leave, and now on the night of his sudden death.

To look at this portrait meant to ignore all intervening time, to forget that dread thing, that shrouded and awful something stretched on the bed in the room below. To look at it meant to be transported to a garden in Hampshire, to a lawn giving on Southampton Water, a lawn vivid and green in the shadow of the frothing hawthorns, grey in the softer stretches dotted with munching cattle which swept out to the far-off, tremulous line intersected with distant masts. She had dreaded to look or to think of that line. It meant the sea—that ugly void of wind and wave that was to carry him away from her. How determinedly she had put the thought aside, rejoicing in the moment, the soft atmosphere, the persistent hum of bees, the enervating cooing of the wood-pigeons.

Yet the eve of the day had come when the regiment was to sail, and when, across the intimacies of the cottage dining-table they

they looked at each other and avoided each other's eyes. Her husband had been in London on business for three or four days (it was some years before they finally settled in the North), and was to return by the last train. He had returned, punctually, as he did everything, and she recalled, as if it had been yesterday, the sound of his monotonous breathing through that last night. She had been unable to sleep, waiting for the morning, the morning when the dead man, then a slim young lieutenant, was to creep down to meet her in the little wood they reached by the orchard gate. Yes, in looking back she remembered everything. Her foolish fear of being too soon at the trysting-place, her dread of being too late. She recalled how she had strained her ears to listen for awakening sounds, how she had at last caught the click of an opening door, followed by cautious footsteps in the hall. To creep down was the work of a moment. Once below, and outside the cottage walls, the scent of the new-mown hay was in her nostrils, and in her limbs the intoxicating freshness of morning. She could see his figure in front of her on the narrow winding path, and heard her own welcoming cry, as she caught up her gown in the dewy grass, and darted towards him in the strange, westward-trending shadows.

And now he was dead. The white mockery of a man below-stairs, that shrouded thing, so numbing in its statue-like immobility, was all that remained. What had she left? What tangible remembrance of that lost possession, that she might finger and gloat over in secret? To unhook the photograph with its tarnished wire and dusty frame was her first impulse, but even when she clasped it in her hands the portrait seemed, in a fashion, to evade her. The modelling of the features had evaporated, the face was almost blank. She craved for something more tangible, more human, something more intimately his.

The

The nightlight, which she had raised to look at the photograph, guttered and diminished to little more than a spark. Throwing on a wrap, she pinched the wick with a hair-pin to kindle the flame, and then, with a swift glance at the sleeping man, turned with a stealthy movement to the door. What if her husband should wake? A crack, at the moment, from the great oak cupboard at the other side of the room made her start with trembling apprehension. It sounded loud enough to waken fifty sleepers, but the noise died away in the corner from which it came, and the steady breathing of the man continued as if nothing had disturbed the strained and looming silence. Catching her breath she again moved forward, though assailed by the dread of the door-handle rattling, and the fear that there might be a loose board on the stairs. Screening the light from the sleeping man's eyes, Mrs. Rathbourne made her way round the bed, and, pulling the door noiselessly to behind her, steadied herself to listen.

In the gloom of the empty passages a sinister faintness seemed to hover; the mist had eked in at the long landing window, and added a mystery all its own to the unfamiliar lines of the house. There was silence everywhere—in the room she had left and in the one her sister-in-law now occupied facing the stairs. Only from the lower hall came the harsh, mechanical tick, tick, tick (with a slight hesitation or hitch in every third tick) of the eight-day clock which confronted the hall-door.

Down towards it she crept, shading the dim light to see in front of her, while the great shadow of her own figure rose, as she turned the corner of the staircase, and filled the obscure corners of the lower passage walls.

Beneath it was the dead man's room. She saw, with a catch at the heart, that the latch had slipped, and knew by the long inch-strip of ominous darkness, that the door stood ajar. With averted eyes

eyes—for she dreaded with an unaccountable dread that shrouded something on the bed—she leant her elbow on one of the upper panels, and with the stealthy movement of a cat slipped inside. An insatiable desire mastered her. The nervous hands twitched, her eyes travelled hungrily from one object to another, round the room. It was *his* room. The room in which he had slept, and lived, and died . . . . in it there must be something which he had used, that he had touched, and handled, that she could seize and call her own?

But the mortuary chamber wore that rigid, unfathomable look peculiar to rooms where the dead lie. Everything had been tidied, straightened; the dressing-table was bare, the books, papers, even the medicine-bottles had been cleared away. His favourite armchair—the chair, she remembered with a shiver, in which he had died—had been ranged stiffly, itself a dead thing, against the wall. There was no trace of life, or suggestion of it, in an emptiness which ached. Mrs. Rathbourne gazed at the mechanically arranged furniture in a baffled way, dimly realising that the soul of the room had fled from it, as it had from the body of the man she loved. Nothing remained but the shell. The kindly, loyal, and withal quaintly sarcastic man, who had struggled with disease within those four walls, had been posed, too, in the foolishly conventional attitude of the dead, the white sheet transforming the body into the mere shapeless outline of a man. He was hidden, covered up, put away, as he would soon be beneath the earth, to be forgotten.

Mrs. Rathbourne drew near the bed, holding the feeble light aloft with a trembling hand. With dilated eyes she stooped over the shrouded thing, and then, when about to raise the coverlid, fell back, as earlier in the evening, with a renewed sense of horror. Her pulse leapt, and then seemed to cease altogether. The strange-

ness

ness of death paralysed the very muscles of her arm. She wanted . . . . she wanted the living, not the dead. It was the living man who, though so rarely seen, had filled the dreary emptiness of her life. She wanted the man, not the clay. Dazed, unstrung, and with the odd sensation of a hand clutching at her heart, she dropped into one of the cretonne-covered chairs beside the bed, and, as she did so, became conscious that her arm touched something warm.

It was a well-worn dressing-gown which had been thrown over the chair-back, the sleeve still bulging and round with the form of the man who had worn it that very day. In one of the wide-open pockets there was a crumpled handkerchief, while about it there hovered the vague odour of cigars. The button at the breast, she noticed, was loose and hung by a thread as if he had been in the habit of playing with it, even the bit of frayed braid on the cuff spoke in some unaccountable way of palpitating, everyday, intimate life.

A gush of tears—the first she had shed—rose to the wretched woman's eyes. She pressed her pinched lips to the warm, woolly sleeve, and then, with a convulsive movement, seized the dressing-gown and pressed it passionately against her flat chest. With the bundle in her arms, hugged close in guilty exultation, Mrs. Rathbourne stole to the door, and so noiselessly out and up the stair.

As before, the dank night swooned in the dour passages. With a hurrying beat, a beat which seemed to speak of the inexorable passage of time, the hall clock ticked, while behind, in the silent room, the motionless figure with the upturned feet loomed grim and aloof in the faint gleam of the vanishing light.

An Autumn Elegy

By C. W. Dalmon

Now it is fitting, and becomes us all
To think how fast our time of being fades.
The Year puts down his mead-cup, with a sigh,
And kneels, deep in the red and yellow glades,
And tells his beads like one about to die;
For, when the last leaves fall,
He must away unto a bare, cold cell
In white St. Winter's monastery; there
To do hard penance for the joys that were,
Until the New Year tolls his passing bell.

And 'tis in vain to whisper, "Be of cheer,
There is a resurrection after death;
When Autumn tears will turn to Spring-time rain,
As through the earth the Spirit quickeneth
Toward the old, glad Summer-life again!"
He will not smile to hear,
But only look more sorrowful, and say,
"How can you mock me if you love me? No;
The day draws very nigh when I must go;
The new will be the new; I pass away."

Yet,

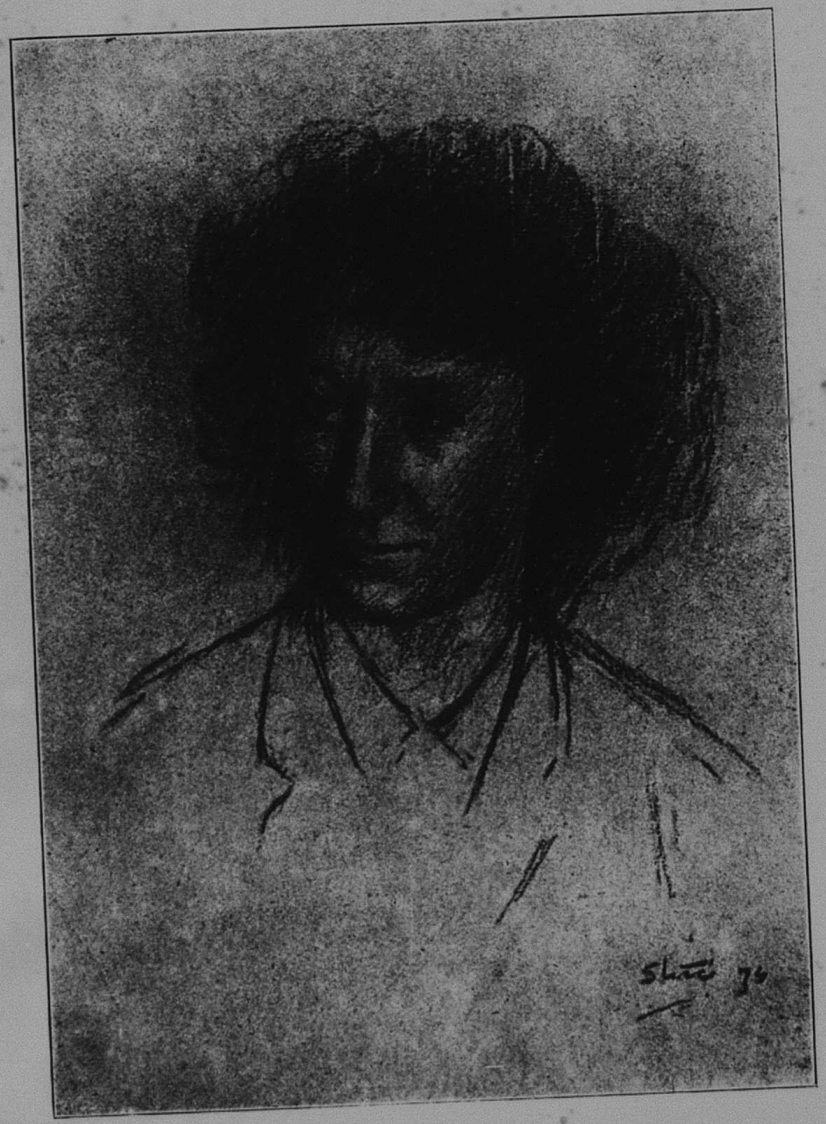
Yet, kneeling with him, still more sad than he,
I saw him once turn round and smile as sweet
As in the happy rose and lily days,
When, from between the stubble of the wheat,
A Skylark soared up through the clouds to praise
The sun's eternity.
Hope seemed to flash a moment in his eyes;
And, knowing him so well, I know he thought—
"How fair the legend through the ages brought,
That still to live is Death's most sweet surprise!"

Two Pictures

By P. Wilson Steer

I. A Lady in Grey

II. Portrait of Emil Sauer



The End of an Episode

By Evelyn Sharp

Allan Drew, the novelist, had gone blind. And the ladies who had come to inquire after him sat and discussed the matter over their afternoon tea. Most of the people from the country round who had come with the same object had gone away baffled by his uncompromising attitude; for Allan Drew had never cultivated the particular set of social emotions which were demanded by his present situation; and he had no intention of helping the people, who bored him, to get through a formula of compassion that he did not want. So this afternoon he sat and listened in silence while his visitors talked with conviction about a trial of which they had not the least experience.

"It is difficult, sometimes, to understand the workings of Providence, but——" said the Rector's wife. In spite of the years of practice that she must have had in the work of consolation, she did not seem to be getting on very well now.

To the novelist she appeared to be wavering between an inclination to treat him like a villager who had to be patronised and a Parish Councillor who had to be propitiated.

"Almost impossible, yes," said Allan Drew, and he shifted his position wearily.

"I think Fate is sometimes kinder than she seems at first sight," said

said the Squire's wife, who had read some modern novels, and therefore did not talk of Providence.

"No doubt there are instances," assented the blind man patiently, and he wondered vaguely why the third lady whom they had indistinctly mentioned to him on their arrival had not spoken at all. He had not lost his sight long, and it worried him to be unable to attach any kind of personality to her.

"Loss of physical sight may sometimes mean a gain of spiritual perception," the Rector's wife laboured onwards. She sometimes copied out her husband's sermons for him, and she had dropped unawares into the phraseology.

"It is to be hoped there are compensations," said her host, and he turned towards the sofa where he imagined his unknown guest to be sitting.

The third lady spoke at last.

"I suppose there's some good in being blind, as you both seem to think so, but I don't know where it comes in, I'm sure; and I'm perfectly certain nothing can make up for it for all that," she said, not very clearly; but the novelist hailed her incoherence with relief, and recognised the human note in it.

"Nothing can," he said, and nodded in her direction.

The third lady went on:

"I wonder, have you tried Dr. Middleton?" His countenance fell again. After all, she was only like everybody else.

"Oh no, I haven't tried him, nor any one else you are likely to mention," he answered with a touch of impatience.

"Haven't you, really? Now I call that rather a pity; don't you?"

"Oh, very likely," he said indifferently, and waited for them to go. The Squire's wife was the first to move, and she pressed his hand warmly and made the unnecessary remark that her husband

husband would come and read the paper to him as usual in the morning. The squire had a blatant voice, and thought it necessary to read with a great deal of expression, and always mistook the novelist's affliction for deafness.

"I shall be delighted," said Allan in a spiritless voice.

But after all it was not the Squire who came to read the *Times* to him on the following morning. It was the unknown lady of the night before; and she knocked at his door just as the housekeeper was clearing away the breakfast.

"The Squire has a cold," she explained, with the faintest suggestion of laughter in her voice, "and I said I would come instead. It is so unpleasant to read to any one if you've got a cold, isn't it? It makes so many interruptions."

"It is very unpleasant to be read to by the Squire when the Squire has got a cold," said Allan, boldly. Somehow the reading did not promise to be quite as dull as usual.

"Where shall I begin?" she said, disregarding his remark altogether; "I read atrociously, you know, but I hope you won't mind that."

"How do you expect me to believe it?" he said, and suggested that she should begin with the Foreign News.

She had not under-estimated her powers. She had all the tricks of which a bad reader is capable. She made two or three attempts at every word that baffled her, and said, "Oh, bother!" at the end of each. She forgot to read out any of the explanatory headings, and she rushed through the politics on the Continent as though they all related to one nation whose name she had not mentioned. She frequently read a few lines to herself and then continued aloud further on, while her listener had to supply the context for himself.

"That's the end of the Foreign News," she said presently, to Allan's

Allan's intense relief. "I think politics are very difficult to understand; don't you?"

"I find them most bewildering," he confessed, and he had to wait patiently a little longer while she read the rest of the news to herself and made many comments on it out aloud; and he was quite willing to believe her when she told him presently that there was absolutely nothing in the paper.

"Never mind about the paper, I've had quite enough," he said; "won't you talk instead?"

"What a good idea," she said; "I'll tell you all the news, shall I? There's going to be a temperance meeting in the school-room to-morrow, and I'm going for a walk on Blackcliff Hill this afternoon,"

"I always walk on Blackcliff Hill myself in the afternoon." murmured Allan in parenthesis.

"The squire has got a cold—oh, I told you that," she went on. "And let me see, is there anything else? I know there was a tremendous fuss about something before I got up this morning; somebody took a horse somewhere and broke it somehow or another, its knees or the harness or something, and I came down late to breakfast. That really is all. Did you ever know such a place as this?"

"Oh, but that isn't nearly all," he protested with a smile.

"Why, what else?"

"Well—yourself," he said, and put his leg over the arm of his chair and turned his face in her direction.

"Oh, but that's so dull," she said hastily; "and besides, there isn't anything to tell—there isn't really."

"Yet you have lived," he said slowly, "lived, and perhaps suffered a little as well."

"Well, I suppose I have had my share," she said with the necessary sigh.

"And

"And in all probability loved."

"Loved! Oh, well, of course, every one has—and besides"—— she interrupted again.

"Very possibly hated," he went on deliberately.

"We-ell, perhaps, I don't—well."

"Then let's hear all about it," he said encouragingly.

It seemed really unkind to refuse any one in so sad a situation.

"But," she said wavering, "there's such a lot: where shall I begin?"

"I acknowledge that is a difficulty," he said, weighing the matter carefully, "but perhaps if you were to choose one episode."

"One episode, yes," she said, pondering.

"Taken from an interesting period of your life, before you were so old as to——"

"I really do think——" she burst out angrily.

Allan hastened to explain that his estimate of her age, being based entirely upon what he knew of her wit and understanding, and not upon her personal appearance, was most probably exaggerated.

"But what kind of episode?" she pursued reluctantly.

"Oh, well, that I will leave to you," he said politely; and he found his way to the window, still with his face towards her.

"Before I was married or after?" she asked.

"Well, I should say decidedly after. The probability is that you married very young, so that the episodes, if there really were any, came later on. And I should say that, not very long after either, you may have gone away together to the seaside, where the weather was bad and the days were long, and you began to feel rather bored. And then, let us suppose that your husband was called up to town unexpectedly; and some one else, who was young too, and bored too, staying in the same seaside place——"

"Really,

"Really, Mr. Drew!" cried the other, "one might almost suppose that you knew more about it than I do!"

"One almost might," he agreed, "Shall I go on? Let me see, where was I? Oh, the advent of the other young person, who was also bored. He would probably be an artist of some kind, or perhaps dabble in a profession."

"A novelist?" she suggested.

He bowed his head smilingly.

"For the purposes of argument we will call him a novelist. And this young novelist may have met you perhaps, and you may have gone for long walks together."

"All along the cliff," she murmured.

"And talked Art together?"

"All about the novel that wasn't published then," she added.

"And your husband became still more neglectful."

"And the novelist still more persistent," she put in.

"And the situation developed daily and hourly until your husband——"

"Came back by the midday train one Saturday," she said, resting her chin on her hand.

"And the aspiring novelist had to pack up the novel that was not then published and——"

"And he had to go right away, and he never came back," she cried, suddenly starting up and walking over to the other window, where she remained standing with her back to him.

"Yes?" said Allan with a smile, "then it was nothing but an ordinary episode after all."

There was a little pause, which she occupied by throwing the blind-tassel about.

"Mr. Drew, why did you make up all that nonsense?" she said suddenly.

"It

"It was nonsense then?"

"Why did you make it up, and talk as if—as if it really happened—to somebody—once.

"Why?" he said carelessly. "Oh, because I suppose it did really happen to somebody—once. Didn't it?"

The next pause lasted longer.

"I thought you didn't know," she muttered presently.

The blind-tassel was flying wildly through the air. He laughed slightly.

"I didn't. At least, not until you began to read."

"At all events, *you* have not altered much," she retorted, and the blind-tassel came off in her hand.

"Well, I never," said the Squire's wife from the doorway.

"I have knocked three times. And you don't seem to be reading the paper either. You were talking just as though you had known one another all your lives."

"I believe we were," assented the novelist.

"You see," exclaimed his companion elaborately, "we had just discovered that we met on the East Coast once, ever so long ago, soon after I was married. Isn't it odd?"

"In fact, a coincidence," said Allan to help her out.

The Squire's wife looked as though she did not believe in coincidences much.

"How very strange," she said; "but why in the world didn't you say so last night, Everilde?"

After that, the Squire's wife and Mrs. Witherington did all the talking between them. But Allan managed to get in a word just as they were leaving.

"And what time did you say you would be walking on Blackcliff Hill?" he murmured.

"Ah,"

"Ah," she answered with a laugh. "But I am older now, and Blackcliff Hill is not the East Coast."

"And the novel is published," he said; and he added to himself as they walked away: "I wonder if her husband is still—— Anyhow, I'm not going to find out."

But Everilde Witherington was careful to let him know at their next meeting, which, by the way, did not take place on Blackcliff Hill, that her husband had gone abroad, and that she had come to stay with her great friend, the Squire's wife, to recover from the effects of influenza. After that the conversation flagged a little, and the interview was not such a success as the last one had been.

"You two don't seem to have much to talk about," said the Squire's wife, who was present; "what's the use of being old friends?"

"There isn't any use," said the novelist, "all the old subjects are used up, and we are not in touch with the new ones."

"And besides," added Mrs. Witherington, "the fact of your supposing us to be old friends prevents your joining in the conversation, although you are there all the time, don't you see."

"Oh yes, I see, thank you," said the Squire's wife; "two's company, three's none."

"Oh dear, no, I didn't mean that, really," said her friend; "and besides, that entirely depends on the other two. Some of the best times I have ever had have been with two other people."

"I should like to ask the two other people about that," said Allan.

About a month later they really did meet one evening on Blackcliff Hill, and this time without the Squire's wife.

Blackcliff Hill was a smooth, round chalk rising, covered with gorse and bramble and springy turf, a broad expanse of green slopes

slopes and hollows without a peak or a suggestion of grandeur or barrenness, a hill like a hundred other hills, with a soft fresh breeze that lingered over it without ruffling its surface.

"How did you know it was me?" she said when he called out to her.

"I always know," he answered in a tone which sounded as though he had not wasted his time during the past month.

"Oh," she said as their hands met, "I came up to see the sunset, you know."

"So did I—at least," he said, and smiled.

"The air is very pleasant up here; you can see three counties —I mean one can—I'm so sorry," she stammered.

"It's a favourite walk of mine," he went on as they strolled through the bracken; "I like the placid conventionality of the place."

"That's just what I don't like," she burst out impatiently; "I would much rather have boulders, and miles of heather, and no haystacks, or cornfields, or chimneys."

"The East Coast for instance?" he suggested, and she subsided into a careful study of the three counties.

"Why do you look at me as though you could see my face?" she asked him presently.

"I like to think I can, for the sake of the old times," he answered lightly.

"Oh, those old times!" she cried; "how fond you are of dragging them up. Why can't you leave them alone?"

"Yes, I suppose it is rather invidious," he said solemnly, "now that they are gone."

"Yes, now that they are gone," she echoed, also solemnly.

He laughed outright.

"What a comedy it all is! Do you remember how we lived for

for days, with that midday train on Saturday hanging over our heads? And now that there is no one else to prevent us from loving each other——"

"What do you mean?" she said quickly. He laughed again and felt for her hand, and took it between his.

"Mean? Do you suppose I haven't known it for a whole month, you foolish——"

"Who told you," she asked, and her thoughts flew to the Squire's wife.

"Oh, never mind that. Now, please, I want to know why you didn't tell me you were a widow? Were you afraid of me?"

"What an idea!"

"Then I suppose it was a miserable truce with respectability to enable you to patronise the broken-down novelist without implicating——"

"Allan! How dare you?" she cried, and snatched her hand away. He put his into his pockets, and strolled on.

"Well, you must own it is slightly unaccountable. I thought it was one of your impetuous freaks at first. But you kept it up too long for that. And then I put it down in my vanity to your liking me a little still, and wishing to conceal it. But I was soon dispossessed of that idea. And then finally——"

"How prosy you are," she grumbled, "you are not half so amusing as you used to be."

"No, we don't seem to hit it quite so well as we did then, do we? You see, you were in love with me, and I——"

"You know I never said so once!"

"And we had plenty to talk about. But our conversation is mostly sticky now."

"There isn't the novel any more," she said.

"Nor

"Nor the husband," he rejoined ruthlessly.

They sat down near the top of the hill, and wished for the Squire's wife.

"It's very odd," said the novelist.

"Odd? *I* call it dull."

"Dull, then, if you like. I wonder who invented the ridiculous idea of two people marrying and living happily ever after. It must have been the first man who wrote for money."

"All the same, I'm rather disappointed," said Mrs. Witherington, gazing steadily at the three counties.

"What about? That you can't fall in love with me now that there is nothing against our marrying?"

"Oh no, not that," she said.

"What then?"

"Oh well, only that I hoped, just a little you know, that you might still like me enough to—to ask me, so that I could—oh, bother!"

"So that you could have the intense pleasure of refusing me? Sorry I disappointed you."

"We can go on being chums, though, can't we?" she suggested, pulling up handfuls of moss.

"Oh, don't," he groaned, "do be a little more original than that. *You* are not writing for money, are you?"

"Then," she cried desperately, "there *is* nothing left but the sunset; and what's the use of that when you can't see it?"

"Can't I?" he said in a curious tone, "don't I know that it has just gone down to the line of fir-trees along the canal, and is streaking across the cornfield, and making the hills on this side look warm?"

He was sheltering his eyes from the sun with his hand as he spoke, and Everilde turned and stared at him suddenly.

"Allan,"

"Allan," she cried, catching at his hand and pulling it down, "Allan, you can—you——"

"Yes," he said with a laugh, squeezing her fingers indifferently because they happened to be in his, "yes. I did try Dr. Middleton after all."

"I never thought you could be blind for long," she muttered, "if it had been any one else, now—but why did you keep it to yourself?"

He laughed heartily as he stretched himself out lazily on the grass and tilted his hat forward.

"Do you really want to know? Because I wanted to have my secret to—that's all. You see, I thought that if I were blind and helpless and all that sort of thing, you might get to care a little, don't you see, and——"

"Then we were both disappointed," she said with a note of triumph in her voice. "I'm rather glad of that."

"Dr. Middleton?" she said presently to the three counties. "Then, if it hadn't been for me——"

But no one finished her sentence, for Allan Drew had suddenly bethought him of a cigarette.

Three Drawings

By Aubrey Beardsley

I. The Mysterious Rose Garden

II. The Repentance of Mrs. * * * *

III. Portrait of Miss Winifred Emery


THE REPENTANCE
OF Mrs .....

1880

By Max Beerbohm

Say, shall these things be forgotten
In the Row that men call Rotten,
Beauty Clare?—*Hamilton Aïdé.*

I SUPPOSE that there is no one, however optimistic, that has not wished, from time to time, that he had been born into some other age than this. Poor Professor Froude once admitted that he would like to have been a prehistoric man. Don Quixote is only one of many who have tried to revive the days of chivalry. A desire to have lived in the eighteenth century is common to all our second-rate *litterateurs*. But, for my own part, I have often felt that it would have been nice to live in that bygone epoch when society was first inducted into the mysteries of art and, not losing yet its old and elegant *tenue*, first babbled of blue china and white lilies, and of the painter Rossetti and of the poet Swinburne. It would have been a fine thing to see the *tableaux* at Cromwell House or the Pastoral Plays at Coombe Wood, to have strained my eyes for a glimpse of the Jersey Lily, clapped holes in my gloves for Connie Gilchrist, and danced all night long to the strains of the Manola Valse. The period of 1880 must have been delicious.

It

It is now so remote from us that much therein is hard for us to understand, much must remain mobled in the mists of antiquity. The material upon which any historian, grappling with any historical period, chiefly relies is, as he himself would no doubt admit, whatever has already been written by other historians. Strangely enough, no historian has yet written of this most vital epoch. Nor are the contemporary memoirs, though indeed many, very valuable. From such writers as *Montague Williams*, *Frith*, or the *Bancrofts*, you gain little peculiar knowledge. That quaint old chronicler, H. W. Lucy, describes amusingly enough the frown of Sir Richard (afterwards Lord) Cross or the tea-rose in the Premier's button-hole. But what can he tell us of the negotiations that preceded Mr. Gladstone's return to public life, or of the secret councils of the Fourth Party, whereby Sir Stafford was gradually eclipsed? At such things as these we can but guess. Good memoirs must always be the cumulation of gossip, but gossip, alas, was killed by the Press In the tavern or the barber's shop, all secrets passed into every ear, but from the morning paper little is to be culled. Manifestations are made manifest to us, but the inner aspect of things is sacred. I have been seriously handicapped by having no real material, save such newspapers of the time as *Punch, or the London Charivari*, *The Queen*, *The Lady's Newspaper*, and others. The idea of excavation, which in the East has been productive of such rich material for the historian, was indeed suggested to me, but owing to obvious difficulties had to be abandoned. I trust then that the reader may pardon any deficiencies in so brief an excursus by reason of the great difficulties of research and the paucity of intimate authorities.

The period of 1880 and of the four years immediately succeeding it must always be memorable to us, for it marks a great change

change in the constitution of society. It would seem that during the five or six years that preceded it, the "Upper Ten Thousand," as they were quaintly called by the journals of the day, had taken a somewhat more frigid tone. The Prince of Wales had inclined for a while to be restful after the revels of his youth. The continued seclusion of Queen Victoria, who during these years was engaged upon that superb work of introspection and self-analysis, *More Leaves from the Highlands*, had begun to tell upon the social system. Balls and entertainments, both at Court and in the houses of the nobles, were notably fewer. The vogue of the opera was passing. Even in the top of the season, Rotten Row, so I read, was not intolerably crowded. Society was becoming dull.

In 1880, however, came the Dissolution and the tragic fall of Disraeli, and the sudden triumph of the Whigs. How great was the change that came upon Westminster thenceforward must be known to any one who has studied the annals of the incomparable Parliament of 1880 and the succeeding years. Gladstone, with a monstrous majority behind him and revelling in the old splendour of speech that neither the burden of age nor six years' sulking had made less; Parnell, pale, deadly, mysterious, with his crew of wordy peasants that were to set at naught all that had been held sacred by the Saxon—the activity of these two men alone would have sufficed to raise this Parliament above all others. What of young Randolph Churchill, who, despite his halting speech, foppish mien and rather course fibre of mind, was yet the most brilliant parliamentarian of the century? What pranks he and his little band played upon the House! How they frightened poor Sir Stafford and infuriated the Premier. What of the eloquent atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, pleading at the Bar, striding forward to the very mace, while the Tories yelled and mocked at him,

him, hustled down the stone steps with the broadcloth torn to tatters from his back? Imagine the existence of God being made a party question! I wonder if such scenes can ever be witnessed again at St. Stephen's as were witnessed then. Whilst these curious elements were making themselves felt in politics, so too in Society were the primordia of a great change. The aristocracy could not live by good breeding alone. The old delights seemed vapid, waxen. Something new was wanted. And thus came it that the spheres of fashion and of art met, thus began the great social renascence of 1880.

Be it remembered that long before this time there had been in the heart of Chelsea a kind of cult of Beauty. Certain artists had settled there, deliberately refusing to work in the ordinary official way, and "wrought," as they were wont to put it, "for the pleasure and sake of all that is fair." Swinburne, Morris, Rossetti, Whistler, Burne-Jones, were of this little community—all of them men of great industry and caring for little but their craft. Quietly and unbeknown they produced their poems or their pictures or their essays, read them or showed them to one another and worked on. In fact, Beauty had existed long before 1880. It was Mr. Oscar Wilde who first trotted her round. This remarkable youth, a student at the University of Oxford, began to show himself everywhere, and even published a volume of poems in several editions as a kind of decoy to the shy artificers of Chelsea. The lampoons that at this period were written against him are still extant, and from them, and from the references to him in the contemporary journals, it would appear that it was to him that Art owed the great social vogue she enjoyed at this time. Peacock feathers and sunflowers glittered in every room, the curio shops were ransacked for the furniture of Annish days, men and women, fired by the fervid words of the young Oscar,

Oscar, threw their mahogany into the streets. A few smart women even dressed themselves in suave draperies and unheard-of greens. Into whatever ballroom you went, you would surely find, among the women in tiaras and the fops and the distinguished foreigners, half a score of comely ragamuffins in velveteen, murmuring sonnets, posturing, waving their hands. "Nincompoopiana" the craze was called at first, and later "Æstheticism."

It was in 1880 that Private Views became necessary functions of fashion. I should like to have been at a Private View of the Old Grosvenor Gallery. There was Robert Browning, the poet, button-holing a hundred friends and doffing his hat with a courtly sweep to more than one duchess. There, too, was Theo Marzials, poet and eccentric, and Walter Sickert, the impressionist, and Charles Colnaghi, the hero of a hundred tea-fights, and young Brookfield, the comedian, and many another good fellow. My Lord of Dudley the *virtuoso*, came there leaning for support upon the arm of his fair young wife. Disraeli, with his lustreless eyes and face like some seamed Hebraic parchment, came also and whispered behind his hand to the faithful Cory. What interesting folk! What a wonderful scene! A chronicler of the time thus writes of it:

"There were quaint, beautiful, extraordinary costumes walking about—ultra-æsthetics, artistic-æsthetics, æsthetics that made up their minds to be daring, and suddenly gave way in some important point—put a frivolous bonnet on the top of a grave and glowing garment that Albert Dürer might have designed for a mantle. There were fashionable costumes that Mrs. Mason or Madame Elise might have turned out that morning. The motley crowd mingled, forming into groups, sometimes dazzling you by the array of colours that you never thought to see in full daylight. . . . . Canary-coloured garments flitted cheerily by garments of the saddest green. A hat in an agony of pokes and angles

angles was seen in company with a bonnet that was a gay garland of flowers. A vast cape that might have enshrouded the form of a Mater Dolorosa hung by the side of a jauntily-striped Langtry-hood."

Of the purely æsthetic fads of Society were also the Pastoral Plays at Coombe Wood, and a very charming fad they must have been. There was one specially great occasion when Shakespeare's play, "As you like it," was given. The day was as hot as a June day *can* be, and every one drove down in open carriages and hansoms, and in the evening returned in the same way. It was the very Derby Day of æstheticism. "To every character in the play was given a perfectly appropriate attire, and the brown and green of their costumes harmonised exquisitely with the ferns through which they wandered, the trees beneath which they lay, and the lovely English landscape that surrounded the Pastoral Players." It must have been a proud day for the Lady Archibald Campbell, who gave this fête, and for E. W. Godwin, who directed its giving. Fairer to see than the mummers were the guests who sat and watched from under the dark and griddled elms. The women wore jerseys and tied-back skirts. Zulu hats shaded their faces from the sun. Bangles shimmered upon their wrists. And the men of fashion wore light frock-coats and light top-hats with black bands, and the æsthetes were in velveteen, carrying lilies.

Nor does it seem that Society went entirely to the æsthetes for instruction in life. There was actively proceeding, at this time, an effort to raise the average of aristocratic loveliness, quite independently of the æsthetes. The Professional Beauty was, more strictly, a Philistine production. What exactly this term, Professional Beauty, signifies, how any woman gained a right to it, we do not and may never know. It is certain, however, that there

there were at this time a number of women to whom it was applied. They received special attention from the Prince of Wales, and hostesses would move heaven and earth to have them at their receptions. Their portraits were exhibited in every shop. Crowds assembled before their door every morning to see them start for Rotten Row. Mrs. Langtry, the incomparably beautiful, Mrs. Wheeler, who always appeared in black, and Lady Lonsdale, afterwards Lady de Grey, were all of them famous Professional Beauties. We may doubt whether the movement, symbolised by these ladies, was quite in accord with the dignity and elegance that always should mark the best society. Any effort to make Beauty compulsory robs Beauty of its chief charm. But, at the same time, we do believe that this movement, so far as it came of a real wish to raise a practical standard of feminine loveliness for all classes, does not deserve the strictures that have been passed upon it by posterity. One of its immediate consequences was the incursion of American ladies into London. Then it was that these pretty little creatures, "clad in Worth's most elegant confections," first drawled their way into the drawing-rooms of the great. Appearing, as they did, with the especial favour of the Prince of Wales, they had an immediate success. They were so wholly new that their voices and their dresses were mimicked *partout*. The English beauties were very angry, especially with the Prince, whom alone they blamed for the vogue of their rivals. History credits the Prince of Wales with many notable achievements. Not the least of these is that he discovered the inhabitants of America.

It will be seen that in this renascence the keenest students of the exquisite were women. Nor, however, were men wholly idle. Since the days of King George the noble art of self-adornment had been sadly neglected by them. Great fops, like D'Orsay,

D'Orsay, had come upon the town, but never had they formed a school. Dress, therefore, had become simpler, wardrobes smaller, fashions apt to linger. In 1880 arose the sect that was soon to win for itself the title of "The Mashers." What exactly this title signified I suppose no two etymologists will ever agree. But we can learn clearly enough from the fashion-plates and caricatures of the day what the Mashers were in outward semblance, from the lampoons what was their mode of life. Unlike the Dandies of the Georgian era they made no pretence to any qualities of the intellect, and, wholly contemptuous of the æsthetes, recognised no art save the art of dress. Much might be written about the Mashers. The Music Hall was unknown to them, but nightly they gathered at the Gaiety Theatre. Nightly the stalls were fulfilled with row after row of small, sleek heads, surmounting collars of monstrous height. Nightly in the *foyer* were lisped the praises of Kate Vaughan, her graceful dancing, or of Nellie Farren, her matchless fooling. Never a night passed but the dreary stage-door was surrounded by a crowd of fools bearing bouquets and fools incumbent upon canes. A strange cult! I used to know a lady whose father was actually present at the first night of "The Forty Thieves," and fell enamoured of one of the *coryphées*. By such links is one age joined to another.

There is always something rather absurd about the past. It is easy to sneer at these Mashers, with their fantastic raiment and vacuous lives. It is easy to laugh at all that ensued when first the mummers and the stainers of canvas strayed into Mayfairs To me the most wonderful moment or the pantomime has alway. seemed to come when the winged and wired fairies begin to fade, away and, as they fade, clown and pantaloon tumble on joppling and grimacing. The social condition of 1880 fascinates me in the same manner. Its contrasts are irresistible.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, in my study of the period, I may have fallen so deeply beneath its spell that I have tended, now and again, to exaggerate its real importance. I lay no claim to the true historical spirit. I fancy it was a red-chalk drawing of a girl in a mob-cap, signed "Frank Miles, 1880," that first impelled me to research. To give an accurate and exhaustive account of the period would need a far less brilliant pen than mine. But I hope that, by dealing, even so briefly as I have dealt, with its more strictly sentimental aspects, I may have lightened the task of the scientific historian. And I look to Professor Gardiner and to the Bishop of Oxford.

Proem to "The Wonderful Mission of Earl Lavender"

By John Davidson

THOUGH our eyes turn ever waveward
  Where our sun is well-nigh set;
Though our Century totters graveward
  We may laugh a little yet.

Oh! our age-end style perplexes
  All our elders time has tamed;
On our sleeves we wear our sexes,
  Our diseases, unashamed.

Have we lost the mood romantic
  That was once our right by birth?
Lo! the greenest girl is frantic
  With the woe of all the earth.

But we know a British rumour,
  And we think it whispers well:
"We would ventilate our humour
  In the very jaws of Hell."

Though

Though our thoughts turn ever Doomwards,
  Though our sun is well-nigh set,
Though our Century totters tombwards,
  We may laugh a little yet.

Frontispiece for Juvenal

By Aubrey Beardsley

(Double-page Supplement)


C. HENTSCHEL fc